



MR. EISENHOWER'S illness has given rise to adverse comment, in more than one quarter, on the inflexibility of the American constitution, which fixes a rigid term for the head of government and allows for no emergency election of a successor. This is regarded by some as being the first recorded approval, though only indirect, of the French system.

FRESH and thrustful thinking on the nation's economic mess was perhaps never more urgently needed than last week, when, fortunately, a grateful public learned that Mr. Grimond was condemning high taxation, Mr. Gaitskell prescribing expanded production



as the cure for inflation, Mr. Watkinson asserting that a continued race between wages and prices could ruin us all, and Mr. Thorneycroft sponsoring an illustrated booklet advocating stable prices at home and a strong pound abroad.

EDUCATIONISTS at higher levels were doubtful about the suggestion that Derbyshire schoolchildren should go on aircraft flights to learn local geography, but many teachers think it could be the ideal answer to that old trouble of continual gazing out of the window.

MILLIONS of Britons, already uneasy over artificial satellites, intercontinental ballistic missiles and unidentified cigar-shaped objects, felt prickings of real alarm on reading that a series of eruptions "of the highest intensity" are

now taking place on the surface of the sun. Many believe that if this sort of thing continues its cumulative effect is bound, in the long run, to interfere seriously with television reception.

No offers have been forthcoming to take on the jobs of the Archbishop of

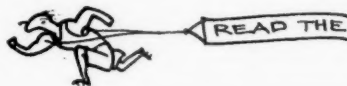


Canterbury's "seven wise men" to put our economy to rights. The trouble seems to be that no wise man would be fool enough to try.

In a week when the news pages were full of somewhat larger issues it was relaxing to read the *Birmingham Mail* report that police in Central Japan had found a boy with no fingerprints. But it might have said how.

No one seems quite clear on why plans for a European Common Market are being held up, though readers between the lines see a clue in reports that for some time now "four sub-committees have been sitting night and day."

AMBITIOUS amateur sportsmen eagerly read Mr. Chris Brasher's *Observer* piece



on what they could expect to get out of being ambitious amateur sportsmen,

even though there was no mention of getting jobs on the *Observer*.

It is too early to guess what will result from the Postmaster-General's decision to use a market research organization to increase Post Office efficiency, but one thing it may settle is the future prospects for the sale of halfpenny stamps.

WITH N.A.T.O.'s stability in the balance, cerebral vascular accidents on everybody's lips, Russia warning Turkey, Mr. Macmillan looking "weary and white-faced," fresh demonstrations in Cyprus, nervousness on Wall Street,



nuclear stockpiles promised for U.S. bases in Europe, more Israel-Jordan border incidents, and scientists in Washington's missile inquiry boosting tranquillizer sales with a vertical take-off, it was reassuring to read that Whitehall, unruffled, had made an order reducing by elevenpence per lb. the customs duty on unblown hatters' fur.

One or two slighting comments greeted Sir John Harding's acceptance of a bank directorship, but these will soon be forgotten when he has rounded up the first few batches of terrorists in the National Union of Bank Employees.

Full Circle

WHEN Guatemala tries to seize One of our precious colonies Be calm. *We* sometimes got 'em à la Guatemala.

Per Cent Per Scent

(Mr. Gerald Nabarro has tabled fifty questions on purchase-tax for the current session of Parliament)

OH, why, if you fasten a grid to your grate
Purchase tax should be charged at the maximum rate,
And why if you perfume your elegant tan
You must pay on the smell what you gain on the can,
And why if there isn't a smell they relent
And are willing to settle for 30 per cent,
And why if a basket is bought at the stores
You pay six times as much if you take it outdoors,
And why when cold hair is quite cheap for a girl
She must pay through the nose if she hots up her curl,
And why if a mowing machine, at a guess,
Cuts a foot and a half they should let you pay less,
And why can all calendars freely be sold
If the picture thereon is a hundred years old
But you have to stump up, under Sub-Section 5,
So long as the artist is nearly alive,
Why Plan File Chests are at this time unable
To earn the concession if fixed to a table,
Why must Holders of Teeth-Brush pay maximum tax
Minus 60 per cent if you keep them in Racks,

And why if you wear a false beard they should say
If it's all gummed together of course you must pay,
But gladly agree the whole thing is untaxable
If each separate hair should be separately waxable,
Why the privileged spinet, in grandeur, enjoys
Exemption denied other makers of noise,
And if 30 per cent is no less than a scandal
For prams with a Minimum Vertical Handle,
And why a susceptible Chancellor still
Lets the Cake Board escape while he soaks the Cake Frill,
And why among animal furs it should be
The Australian opossum alone that goes free—
These jolly conundra (some fifty or so)
Are the things that our Gerald is aching to know,
Having sworn his great oath, by the bones of Nabarro,
As straight as a die and as swift as an arrow,
That he won't be put off by evasions and homilies
Till he's killed this fool tax and exposed its anomalies
Being wholly convinced it's bung full of absurdities—
To which Echo respectfully answers "My word, it is."

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

The Speaking Shade

By GWYN THOMAS

FIRST we chase the living, then we chase the dead. These appear to be the two great phases in the vital canter, and the only thing you can say for them is that, done in reason, they do not get you into gaol as fast

as theft. Orpheus walks at the head of an enormous pack. The most eminent stroller in this kind of private shadow-land I ever met was Luther Cann, the manager of our cinema, the Colisseum.

Cann was a timid man. His bovaric angle gaped at an ideal that would have made him a hard ruthless mauler of the order of Mickey Jacobs or Harry Greb, a mean, tough-talking little dynamo as willing to strip the hide off you as say good-day.

But Cann was never less than about five thousand polar miles away from this ideal. As a boy he had bought a second-hand punch-ball and tried some shadow boxing with it in his bedroom. Luck was against him even then. His father was religious and against any type of violence that was not levelled specifically against the impious. What was worse, the house in which Cann lived was in one of the brittlest and most collapsible parts of Meadow Prospect. The night on which Luther started his first bout of shadow boxing in the bedroom, the house, unknown to him, was on the edge of its most drastic crumble. His father was below spooning his way

through a dish of toast soaked in tea and preparing a written statement on Job for the Bible Study Group. He had already heard the muffled beat of Cann's punch-bag and had thought it might indicate the approach of some new tremendous mental image of anguish that would give Job a complete new set of paint. Then Cann in the bedroom gave a few pantherine leaps and part of the kitchen ceiling, together with Cann and his apparatus, came down on the old man. He burned the punch-bag and forced Cann back into his own frowning pacificism.

Cann came into the ownership of the Colisseum. His manner was neat and his speech soft. If at the back of his busy and prospering mind his fancy was still laying people flat on resined boards you would not have guessed it. Then there was an outbreak of hooliganism in his cinema. Cann had expelled from the premises one young ruffian who had been making cat-calls during the tender passages in the films being shown at the Col. He came back a week later with a band of affiliated yahoos whose programme was frankly



"Therefore let the fifteen of us in the N.A.T.O. work together as a team . . . a rugger team."



SAINT JOAN: "How long, O Lord, how long?"

[Saint Joan, Epilogue.]



to drive Cann off the hinge. They would scatter monkey-nut shells in the aisles and stamp on them, a sound that Cann hated. They would flip lighted cigarette ends into the air, causing the older and more nervous patrons to press Cann for an issue of small asbestos helmets. They would make brazen advances to the girls, and this encouraged the attendance of insolent maidens who were in flight from the Band of Hope and took easily to molestation. This kept Cann's electric torch in constant play and he developed a callus on his switch finger.

When Cann or his principal usher, Charlie Lush, went down the aisle to deal with these elements they were tripped up and often struck. Cann and Lush took to cowering in the back, often behind the plush drapes that so often

mask doors in cinemas. This type of purdah took every nerve in Cann's body down a notch.

Then on to the staff of the Col. came Mostyn Mee. Mostyn was an orphan and a starveling in a style Dickens would have loved. His body was thin to the point of deformity and he crept about as grey and spectrally evanescent as a mouse. One night in the Col. a young voter called Tudor Tothill was kicking up a grade-A fuss, tearing seats out of their sockets and threatening to throw Cann and Lush right through the screen. Tothill was also urging a whole platoon of friends to whistle and do a set of folk-dances on the monkey nuts. Cann and Lush trembled in the back of the hall waiting for God or the police to do the right thing with Tothill.

Without a word Mostyn Mee shuffled down the aisle. Thirty seconds later Tothill was seen coming up the aisle, very bent. But Tothill's legs were not moving nor were his eyes very bright. He was being carried on the shoulders of Mostyn Mee. According to bystanders Mostyn had walked into the row in front of Tothill's, invited Tothill in a voice as soft as an old leaf to lean forward. He had let drive with a six-inch right-hand punch that had left Tothill senseless.

That was the beginning of the Mostyn Mee legend. Cann poured all his dreams into Mostyn. He had him intensively trained and chose "Little Moss" as his fighting title. The whole boxing world bowed down before Mostyn. The sports writers dipped their

pens into the gravy of a great new saga. The littleness of Mostyn's body that grew not an ounce heavier with good feeding, the incredible speed of his feet, the unmoving eyes, the almost pained embarrassment of his expression, and that right hand that might have had twenty demonic stone, not just seven, behind it. It was just as if the accumulated anger and disgust of the whole pallid tribe of Mees had found a miraculous outlet in the fists of this boy.

Forty fights in a row he won and not a bruise on his body to show for them. He moved right up into the class of world-contender in fourteen months. Luther Cann grew like a happy mastiff in the warmth of Mostyn's fame. Then a week before he was to meet that American light-weight in Paris Mostyn was thrown from a horse. He loved the biggest horses he could find because they made him feel so tall as he rode them at insane speeds up and down the hillsides. It was his only bit of showiness.

When he was thrown a pneumonic shock of the worst kind took him in its bitter stride. He went out of life with the same kind of unruffled inoffensiveness he had shown all the way through.

And that is where we come to Luther Cann as Orpheus. The rest of his life was left sunless by the going of Mostyn and he roamed about in the darkness for another such. Somewhere, he believed, in a tiny unimpressive body slept the destructive genius that had leaped to glory in Mostyn. His search became a kind of reign of terror for all adolescents who tended to be physically subnormal. If you walked down any street in Meadow Prospect looking shrunken, stooped, hungry and doomed, Cann was sure to spot you and in a few moments he would have whipped you off to the gymnasium of the Y.M.C.A. There he would have you stripped and gloved at magic speed and facing you would be some ruffian specially selected by Cann

to bring out the dormant militancy of the meek. When Cann saw that you were being beaten bandy-legged and wall-eyed he would smile wryly at Mostyn's ghost and hope for better luck next time. Anybody under eight stone was advised to stay hidden in his kitchen, leave town or wear a deceptively thick topcoat. It took most of the pleasure out of being underprivileged.

We decided at a special meeting of the Philosophy Class at the Library and Institute to wean Cann away from this deadly passion by creating in him a fresh interest in his cinema. We drummed up recruits to swell his audience. We bought enough ice-cream from the girl in the aisle to alter the whole direction of our hot little dialectic. We ate enough packaged nuts to make us thirsty and intestinally sluggish for ever more. We even went to see twenty-four British war films in a row to suggest to Cann that there may be alternative phobias. He is beginning to forget.

A Complicated Celt am I

By R. G. G. PRICE

IT is not every man who can claim sympathy as a member of three, repeat three, defeated nations. I may have lived my whole life among the conquerors, enjoying their respect for those they have conquered and the kindness they have developed during centuries of assured power; but inside I am a triple Celt, torn three ways by atavistic loyalties and putting on weight the whole time.

I was a vague child and only too readily confused because my mother was, like myself, Scottish only by hearsay, having been born at Southsea. It takes time for even the most sympathetic geographical teaching to de-confuse the mind of a pupil who believes that Scotland lies south-west of London and likes to imagine the brave warships steaming up the Clyde, turning round the Isle of Wight and then steaming down the Firth of Forth. As I grew older and more suspicious our connection with the Paradise from which we originated grew dim. My great-grandmother, the only ancestor I met socially, had spent her formative years in Worcestershire and I began to feel that the family diaspora belonged to the rather remote past.

My home environment was only intermittently Scottish. One uncle, who seemed to be a product of Sussex, used to talk to me about Stevenson and sometimes remembered to pronounce place-names in a strenuously un-English way; but nobody played the pipes and nobody knew Burns by heart and I was too gently nurtured to be fed haggis. Yet in some moods my mother would

talk of Scotland as though of the Heavenly City. I grew up thinking that I ought to make tremendous exertions and reverse the family's southward trend, resettling us all in the eternal bliss beyond the Tweed. I think she had spent only one holiday there but she often described it to me, though the most vivid picture I could get of it was that the sole of her shoe had come off



while she was climbing Ben Nevis and this had made her half-brother kind to her for once. I interpreted this story as evidence of the poverty and hardness of Scottish life: no presbyterianism and soleless shoes for me. But I felt guilty at my disloyalty.

I thought my Scottish blood was rather demanding and something to be lived up to. It gave me a sense of inner superiority as I looked out of the windows of my South London home, and at the same time made me feel secretly glad that it was not the whole of my blood. There was, for one thing, my Irish streak. In my earliest years this was played down. Incautiously mentioned, it was immediately shrouded. When I was five or six an Irish streak had suggestions of gunmen and strong drink. Only later did it become cultural and boastworthy. I never succeeded in finding out anything about it, not even what fraction of my blood it affected or what part of Old Ireland it was that should make the heart of me leap for joy when it cropped up in conversation. I cherished it in secret. One day the dour surface would break and I should display a perfervid sociability expressed in anecdote and jig. I ranged myself with the Ireland that was a contrast to the high moral tone of my mother's Scotland rather than with any of the worthier Irelands. "It's the Irish in

me," I would murmur defiantly to myself at some falling short that did not seem to strike the family as charming.

At best the Irish blood was only a streak and months would go by without my remembering it. A much more serious challenge to northern rectitude was my Welsh fifty per cent. This was less of a daydream than my Scottish origin. My father had actually been born and brought up in Wales. He still spent holidays there with his brother and his family. We even got letters with Welsh post-marks. I found my father's occasional descriptions of his youth slightly less attractive than he expected. To a London child the highlights of country life seemed charmless, the runaway horses and wild bulls and precipices and badgers with teeth like man-traps; but he was not a very articulate man and he rarely talked about Wales. This left me free to get my own picture of it. My Scottish blood, I came to feel, was something to be lived up to; my Welsh blood was something to relax with, like a pair of old slippers.

My mother firmly damped down any signs in me of Welsh patriotism. I had to be Welsh in private. My occasional efforts to be Welsh in front of visitors were a kind of self-destruction. The Celtic world has always been bitterly divided and my mother's pictures of Wales flamed with Goidelic fantasy. I gathered that, compared to the noble and widely esteemed Scots, the Welsh rightly hung their heads as they skulked about the hills, formed blackhearted colonies under slate roofs and, when raiding across the border, were found to be unwashed, untrusted and unloved. The more I came to know myself the more Welsh I found myself to be. I could never see myself walking south with a handful of oats and a volume of *The Georgics* and ending as a colonial governor or the chairman of a bank, while I could easily imagine myself idling away my days in village gossip, smiling at the Conquerors while I worked

out ingenious disparagements to use when they had gone away and having bursts of invention out of a flat level of slovenliness. I was delighted when I learned that Wales produced painters and poets. Although I was neither myself I could imagine feeling at home among the cigarette-burns and dirty milk bottles of a studio. Perplexingly I found out that the bottles might quite probably belong to a Welsh firm. Welshmen apparently ran vast industries, like coal and steel and drapery and shipping. They seemed to be as worthily strenuous as the Scots. My mother explained to me, when I raised this point, that there were industries and industries: some required probity, others cunning.

As I walked about the commons of South London I enjoyed feeling within me the warring of three ancient races, all of whom had been ground down by the forbears of the passers-by, the gentle, friendly English among whom I lived so much more comfortably than I should have done in any of my wet and impoverished native lands. Defeat explained away everything. I might be prickly, but look what Edward the Hammer had done to Us. I might be passionate and poeticizing and without sense of time or subservience; well, who could be punctual whose family tree had been warped by Cromwell and Balfour? I might swing between generosity and treachery, charm and repellence, fawning and back-biting, gaiety and moodiness: I was a fellow victim with Llewellyn ap Gruffydd and Owen Glendower. My pictures of my national characteristics are not, perhaps, exhaustive. They may owe too much to introspection. I have spent less than a month of my life in the Celtic lands, if you exclude Jesus College, Oxford, and Paddington, and my reading has been vivid but snippety. Closer acquaintance with the real thing might undermine my belief in my own excuses. But at the moment I am off the leash. Mother, can you hear me? *Cymru am byth!*

§ §

Pessimism

"Mr. Alan Lennox-Boyd, Colonial Secretary, who had an operation yesterday for removal of the gall bladder, was stated to-day to be 'goin gon all right.'"

Edinburgh Evening News



"The lady next door said 'Yes' to questions four and seven and 'Don't know' to all the rest."

MEETING AN AMERICAN

by Ed Fisher



"Like a little ice in it?"



"What d'you think of our Parliament
—silly, isn't it?"



"Good morning, sir—still standin' it?"



"I imagine you must feel like a Roman
among the Athenians here."



"You know, if your State Department
finds out you've been talking to people
like me you'll probably lose your passport."



"The vital decisions are
all made in Washington.
We're just a backwater;
a charming, urbane, over-
civilized backwater."

Sitting on the Bridge

By WILFRED McNEILLY

IT goes something like this.

There we are, the bunch of us, sitting nice and peaceable on Ballygarnet Bridge, as typical a group of Irish peasantry as ever a tourist could hope to spy, from Jim Harry in his old caubeen to Paddy Joe in his duncher hat.

The sun is shining, or we would not be there. A fine thing it is to be sitting in the sun on the bridge and talking peasant talk with your friends, such as the starting prices at the Curragh and the closing prices on Wall Street and the terrible programmes they do be putting out on the telly. The Saints make us grateful we do not pay for them though talk there is . . .

Then it happens.

The big car comes creeping up the hill to the bridge, all scarlet and chrome and worry at the ruts on the bohreen which have halted better cars than it.

It pulls to a halt beside us the way the decent man wouldn't run us over and us filling the most of the road.

The window goes down and a transatlantic voice drawls: "Say, can you tell me . . ."

Sometimes it has only time to drawl "Say" and once, there was a cold, quickening wind despite the sun, it had time only for an indrawn breath.

For by then Paddy Joe, or it might be Jim Harry, is at the door and staring in. On his face there is a look of great wonder, a glorious, incredulous delight.

"Boys," he says in a low, reverent voice. "Would yez look who's here? Would yez just look at him, now, large as life and only half the age . . . Put it there, now, put it there me old segovia. Man dear, this is wonderful."

By which time we are all about, darkening the light, reckoning the car model, costing the suiting and sniffing the cigar smoke if any.

The driver is bewildered but delighted at the attention.

"I—I'm sorry," he apologizes. "But you've got this all wrong. You don't know me. I've never been here in my life. I just . . ."

"Don't know you!" Paddy Joe raps out, or it might be Jim Harry. Plainly he is taking offence. "What's your name?"

"Rafferty," says the man. Or it might be Reilly or Fagan or even Smith or Smyth.

"Liam Rafferty?" quizzes Paddy Joe. While from the rest of us bursts a formless buzz of "Sean, Seamus, Paddy, Joe . . . the livin' image . . . Like himself come back."

This is the visitor's cue, and if he's a man at all he takes it.

"Why, I guess you must mean my father!" he exclaims. "Liam Rafferty that was."

"God rest his soul." Hats off with military precision.

The rest comes quick and easy.

First, of course, we take him to the old homestead. There are often tears in his eyes as he looks at the fallen-in sod roof, the crumbling walls, the weed-grown garden, though it's a yard they call a garden over there which makes you wonder what they teach in the schools at all.

Then we help him to fill the boot of his car with a few stones from the building so that he can take them home and build a bit of the "ould sod"—and this very phrase I heard one use—into his new ranch-type dwelling in Wisconsin or wherever.

He being a law-abiding citizen worries, but Paddy Joe promises that the owner will not mind and certainly he'll pass on these few notes just to make the old lady feel better and the landlord burning off the roof above her head bad cess to him.



"I think you're all right now. He's feeling ashamed of himself."

And then, of course, we take him round the village so that he'll have memories of all his father's friends to take back with him. And amazing is the number of friends his father had, the kind decent man who would never see a man with an empty glass, especially when we get to Humphrey's House which is a public house.

When the doors close behind him there . . . we have him.

We had one for five days and lost him only when the peelers happened to sober by chance and read the "wanted" notices and so discovered that it wasn't his own money at all the man had been spending.

Of course it doesn't always go so well. We had a teetotaller once who wanted to put up a monument. And once there were two of them on the same day. They started fighting over the front door-post in the ancestral homestead and we had to be very severe on them with the potheen.

And a lot of them are on the wrong road, for who in hell would want to come to Ballygarnet anyway, and they can be troublesome. But a man would never deny his own ancestry, even if it has to be a little far-flung and on the distaff side too. But Jim Harry has a genius for genealogy . . .

Then there was what we all regard as our finest hour.

The big car came creeping up in regulation manner, the sun glinting off its glass and chrome to blind a man.

"Say," said the rich, deep voice.

Jim Harry was into action.

Hand to his eyes, the look of wonder on his face, the dawning delight.

"Would you look who's here, boys. Man if that isn't a surprise. But you've been away too long . . ."

"You know me?" in surprise from the car.

The door opens. A vast form levers itself out. A massive figure in a beautifully tailored suit and with a glinting, ebony skin.

This is the moment. Jim Harry gulps. Then his hand shoots out.

"Put it there," he cries. "I knew yer father well, the decent man . . ."

For English visitors, of course, the technique is rather different, but I dare say you know about that.

Any Complaints?

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

"ALL right, Sergeant-major. Next."
 "Yessir. Cruddy, sir. Smartly now, left - right - left - right - left - right-left! Halt! Private Cruddy, sir."
 "Thank you, Sergeant-major. Private Cruddy?"

"Sir. Nine-three-three-six-five-four-oh-two-one."

"Yes, well, never mind all that. This is quite informal. Stand easy."

"Sir."

"Easy, I said, not at ease. How long have you been in the Army?"

"Nine year."

"Say, 'sir' when you address the Commanding Officer!"

"Sir. Sorry, sir."

"That's all right, Sergeant-major. Nine years, eh? And still don't know the at ease from the easy. No wonder we—brm! However, Cruddy, I want you to tell me what's wrong with the Army. Be frank. Forget I'm the C.O. Say whatever you like. It's just between you and me and the War Office, is that clear?"

"Sir."

"Fire away, then. What would you like to start with. The food?"

"Sir."

"Well, get on."

"Smartly now, answer the Commanding Officer's question!"

"Thank you, Sergeant-major. I didn't tell you to come to attention, Cruddy. Stand easy."

"Sir."

"Not at ease."

"Sir."

"Now about this food, Cruddy. I suppose it's not too good on the whole? Helpings too small. Bacon rinds left on, coffee burnt—that sort of thing, eh? Not at all satisfactory, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"You mean yes, it isn't?"

"No, sir."

"Now listen, Cruddy—Sergeant-major, I think you'd better wait outside; you seem to have an inhibiting effect—Mr. Cruddy, look, won't you sit down?"

"No, sir, ta."

"Oh, come, why not?"

"No chair, sir."

"Mr. Cruddy, I think we've always got on pretty well, you and I, eh?"

"Sir."

"Then won't you help me—shall we

say as a friend? And let me have a few decent complaints about the pay or the leave or the accommodation or the television programmes or something? I mean, put yourself in my place. Who's going to believe me up in White-hall, eh? I mean, if I turn in these complaints forms all blank? Mm? Now then, like a good fellow, come along. What about bull?"

"Sir?"

"Bull, bull! Damn it man, you know what bull is, don't you?"

"Dunno what you mean, sir."

"I'll put it another way. Are you

aware of excessive whitewashing, webbing cleaning, brass polishing, unnecessary parades, needless kit inspections, foot examinations, haircuts and so on?"

"No, sir."

"Cruddy, answer me. Didn't I see you on your hands and knees yesterday scrubbing the cookhouse steps with a bucket of cold water and a bald nail-brush, and Sergeant Brewster i/c, telling you that when you got to the bottom you could go back to the top and start again?"

"I forget, sir."

"I see. You forget. Very well. What



"My husband loves lobster but it doesn't love him."

about your accommodation? Pretty cold these winter nights, I expect?"

"No, sir."

"Beds pretty lumpy, no doubt?"

"No, sir."

"Long walk to the ablutions though, isn't it? On a wet night, through all that mud, past the swill-bins? And when you get there it's ten-to-one there's no soap, towels or bath-plugs, eh?"

"No, sir."

"Ah, no soap, towels or——"

"I mean yes, sir."

"All right. Now tell me. What about the officers here? Don't they make you clean their cars, run errands, lend them money, things of that kind?"

"No, sir."

"But they must do *something* to drive you up the wall. That's what officers are for."

"Very nice gentlemen, sir, the officers."

"Never address you in violent or abusive language?"

"No, sir."

"I see. And you include me among the nice gentlemen?"

"Sir."

"Then I'm sure you'd like to help me, Cruddy, you shifty-looking, scrim-shanking, scrounging, half-shaven, dirty-booted apology for a British fighting man? You'd like to tell me, wouldn't you, you rabbit-faced zombie, of some occasion when you were abused by a superior officer in such a way as to constitute grounds for complaint, damn your dumb insolence, you great, shambling old out-of-wedlock rag-bag, wouldn't you, eh, you big lout? Eh, eh?"

"Sir."

"Is that all?"

"Sir."

"Sergeant-major, come in here!"

"Sir. Yessir."

"Take him away. Is he the last?"

"Yessir. One prisoner on a charge to come."

"All right. I'll hear the case."

"Sir. Private Cruddy. A-bout turn! Quick march! Left-right-left-right-left-right-left-right! Halt! A-bout turn! Prisoner and escort, quick march! Left-right-left-right-left-right-left-right! Halt! The prisoner, sir!"

"What? But it's this fellow Cruddy again!"

"Insubordinate language, sir. When on active service, saying to Corporal Tooley, P., 'This unit is a madhouse. Rotten grub, no hot water, barracks like an ice-rink, N.C.O.s out of Belsen and the Old Man off his nut. I wouldn't half tell the bleeders something, given the chance.'"

"Thank you, Sergeant-major. Call the evidence."

Ex-Vote

By CLAUD COCKBURN

ONE has no intention whatever of entering here into the rights and wrongs of this more or less blazing shindy between Lord Hailsham and Lady Violet Bonham-Carter as to what political organization if any the father of the latter, namely the first Lord Oxford and Asquith, would, were he now alive, be an enthusiastic supporter of.

Lord Hailsham seems to have said—taking for granted, no doubt, that people would realize the whole thing was more or less guesswork—that the former Liberal Prime Minister would to-day have been "allied with the Conservative Party and himself an honoured member of the Cabinet." (The posthumous offer of a Cabinet post is it must be admitted, a boldly imaginative gesture—particularly when made to an ex-Premier.)

Lady Violet says no, a thousand times no. She goes so far as to describe Lord Hailsham's attempt to recruit Lord Oxford as "presumptuous, fraudulent and ignorant." She feels Lord Oxford would have been a Liberal.

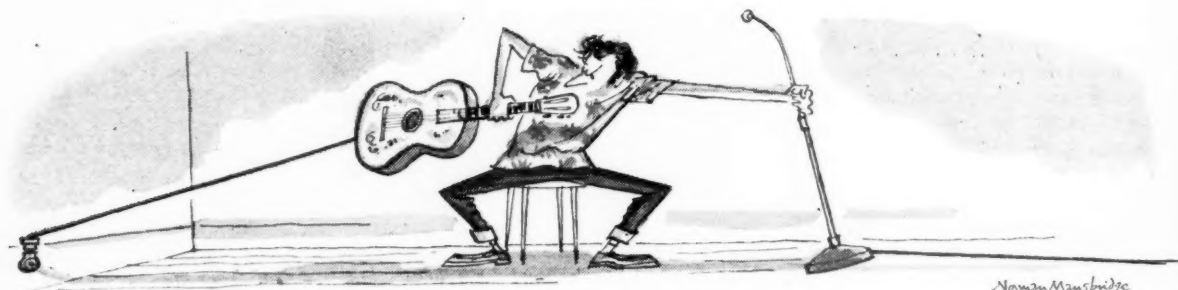
All that is, quite frankly, as maybe. There are, however, grounds for the belief that Lord Hailsham only said what he said because he had an inside tip to the effect that Mr. Gaitskell was all set to announce, as a bombshell political sensation, that the shade of the first Lord Oxford is a moderate Socialist and as such very welcome to a prominent place in the Labour Shadow Cabinet.

It is increasingly realized in party political circles that while among the living voters a certain amount of apathy is deplorably apparent, many of the departed are keen as mustard.

There have, certainly, always been clear-sighted men able and willing to testify that were—say—St. Augustine walking the earth to-day his principal preoccupation and activity would be the advancement of the interests of the Ratepayers' Liberty League or, according to what part of the arena the clear-sighted man is sitting in, the Soak-the-Rich Society.

Such men know such things. They feel it *here*. They can at any moment state without fear of successful contradiction that Buddha was the first Rotarian, or Elk, or whatever it is one is in favour of.

Yet it has to be confessed that, by and large, the potentialities of the Great Deceased have been shamefully neglected, though any party propagandist with an ounce of energy plus



a spark of imagination must surely agree that continued under-estimation and neglect of this body of opinion can only lead in the end to its capture by undesirable elements. It is, in fact, high time that right-thinking people should set about this task in an organized and methodical manner.

"It is no use," pointed out Councillor James Jakes, who was active in rallying Henry V and John Milton to the cause of Sewage Reform, "just sitting there complacently assuming that Great Men and Women throughout the Ages are automatically on our side, without bothering even to check through the lists. Take that slack kind of attitude, and the next thing you know you'll find the other lot has nobbled half a dozen Apostles and Horatio Nelson.

"And then of course," continued the Councillor, "you get another type of worker who has enthusiasm all right for this type of recruitment but thinks it's a bit simpler than it actually is—gets carried away and brings in all and sundry without proper screening. Only the other day we had one of these eager volunteer helpers right here in the office who stated for the record that if the Emperor Heliogabalus were to walk into the Blue Moon Café in Market Street to-morrow he would unhesitatingly proclaim his entire agreement with our programme.

"Tricky, you see. I don't say there aren't those who would welcome the Emperor Heliogabalus on to the platform, if only for what they call the 'snob appeal.' But there's more that can't forget those orgies and the time he tried to murder his cousin. Did us a lot of harm, bringing him in."

Needless to say, there are not wanting unscrupulous party organizers who have sought to increase their share of what may be called "the ex-vote" by methods which must be frankly characterized as dishonest.

While others are "out on the doorstep" of the genuinely top-line deceased, tirelessly lining up such leading figures as Isaac Newton and Florence Nightingale, and appealing to the sporting element with the news that "W. G. Grace would unquestionably support our cause," these characters do not hesitate to claim the allegiance of whole beves of alleged saints, heroes, wise law-givers, deep-thinkers, etc., who, on close examination, cannot be



"Meow!"

traced as ever having existed in history at all.

They rely of course on the fact that most people, on being told that "the great Henry Batchett, who, as everyone knows, was the man mainly responsible for the establishment of British supremacy in world banking and overseas trade, could he be among us to-day would, I can confidently affirm, be marching through the streets behind our banners," feel uplifted by such a thought, their elation but slightly mingled with shame at the knowledge that until this moment they never heard of Batchett.

Complaints have been received that in certain areas some of the smaller Party organizations—people whose notion of a Victory Rally is a dinner celebrating non-loss of deposit—are resorting to tactics which, while being perhaps not actually dishonest, are nevertheless in exceedingly poor taste.

These "tacticians," as they have been described, "of defeat" have, it seems, conceded that to expect ex-men like

Shakespeare and Pitt to team up with a Party which is visibly headed for the basement at the polls is wishful thinking. After all, there are limits beyond which, even after passing on, a man or woman should not be asked to sacrifice his or her prestige.

Instead, selected canvassers are, it is reported, being sent out with the object of getting what may best be described as "a certain type of dead" to join—and publicly join—one or other of the leading Parties, with the clear intention on the part of the organizers responsible of bringing those Parties into disrepute.

"Horatio Bottomley backs Chancellor" is a disconcerting bit of news for those on the receiving end of the kiss of death.

Similarly, dismay was caused in Opposition circles by a recent newspaper report which stated in part that "Dr. Crippen undoubtedly realizes to-day that if Labour had been in power in 1910 he would never so much have thought of poisoning a person and burying the carved-up body in a cellar.



People for Presents

The Old Friend. Bless his cotton socks, you've known him since—well, never mind. And it's still hard to say why. You've met a thousand faces since, and can't even put a name to them now, but he goes on for ever. It would be nice, this Christmas, to express all you feel for the old chump, but you can't start getting sentimental at this late date. Let *Punch* express it for you: that shared understanding of what's good and bad and new and odd and funny in these rum times. But hurry. As usual (the old friend's privilege) he's been left to the last again. Full subscription details are on page 674.

Dr. Crippen's view is that if he could have his time over again he would instead offer free use of the cellar at Hilldrop Crescent, Holloway, to the local Labour Party organization for any purpose they might desire."

In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that several Party organizations have already issued lists of ex-men whose applications for membership have been rejected in advance. Several of the defunct—including members of several Governments between the wars and a sprinkling of ambassadors, military experts and moulders of opinion during the same period—are understood to be protesting against inclusion of their names on these lists.

"It's enough," one of them is reported to have said, suiting the action to the word, "to make one turn in one's grave."

Feather-bed Mile

By ALEX ATKINSON

MY calculations show that if I'd gone on to finish the whole distance when last I attempted a four-minute mile, instead of dropping out after a lap and a half and wishing I was dead, my official time would have worked out at something in the region of half an hour. It was a blustery day, mind you, and we were running in long grass, wearing Army gym shoes and identity discs, so that a world record had been regarded as more or less out of the question from the very outset. All the same we put up a brave show—for Royal Army Pay Corps personnel. One of our most fancied starters was a corporal who had actually gone to the extent of putting in some training on the previous day. I wagered

half a crown on him finishing before anybody else who finished at all, but he made an utter mockery of form by electing to run without his glasses. I can't think what persuaded him to take such a witless step, unless he'd put his money on someone else; but the result of it was that he ran off the course at the very first turn, fell over a lot of non-commissioned spectators who were playing pontoon behind a tree, and twisted his foot. Even I lasted longer than he did, and the whole extent of my training had been to knock out my pipe just as the starter raised his pistol: I was still trailing smoke from my nostrils after the first twenty-five yards, and when I finally fell down they had to give me artificial respiration.

It was a splendid race to watch, though, and somebody won it, and we cheered him like mad for the last hundred yards, and nobody knew how long he'd taken, and nobody cared, and that's the way I like my mile races to be. I like to watch the manoeuvring, the sudden bursts, the all-out effort, the dropping back, the drawing level, the pounding along neck-and-neck, the overtaking—all the excitements that build up to the one great moment when the tape is breasted. In our case, of course, we didn't need a tape, because the six out of twenty who managed to finish came in at roughly half-minute intervals; nor do I recall any sudden bursts to speak of. But the point is that it was a race, and we all wanted to see who could possibly win it without coming to some fearful harm, and that was satisfaction enough.

With this in mind, therefore, I hope the International Amateur Athletic Federation will turn a disapproving frown on the athletics club in Western Sweden which is proposing to build an asphalt-coated rubber track in the hope that it will produce a mile in 3 mins. 50 secs.

Who wants a mile in 3 mins. 50 secs., on rubber or anything else? If six men were to start out together, all on rubber, one of them would very likely run faster than the others, and that would be a race, and it would be good to watch. But would it offer the spectator any better entertainment than if they had all run in normal conditions, or on damp seaweed, or in thigh-boots, or with a



"Nonsense—that's not a bit like dear Mr. Macmillan."

great big dumb-bell strapped to each wrist? Not a scrap. A man running at fifteen miles an hour looks uncannily like a man running at fourteen miles an hour to a person in the grandstand, and it takes years of practice for a person in the grandstand to get any sort of sense out of a stop-watch.

So let's hear no more of this record business. If it's records you people in Sweden want, I've no doubt the 220 yards hurdles could be polished off in something like 15 secs. flat if you were to make use of six hurdles instead of ten. And think what marvels could be achieved in the 16-lb. hammer throw by the introduction of a 12-lb. hammer. For that matter, Sweden's own J. Ljunggren's 30-mile walk in 4 hours 21 mins. 11 secs. is going to look rather silly when I have put the finishing touches to a certain little petrol-driven invention for fitting to the sole of one shoe, with a spare wheel to tuck in the sock.

I can tell you here and now, without fear of contradiction, that a man will one day run a mile in 2 mins. 1.4 secs.—ay, and even less, in electronic boots. But for the life of me I can't see how I'd get any more satisfaction out of seeing him do it than I did out of watching those gallant lads thrashing through the tall grass on that evening long ago. On account of some fault in the elastic, the shorts of the victor were held up by a pair of Army braces wound round him like a belt. Whether that gave him any advantage over his adversaries or not I cannot be certain; nor can I say whether the issue was affected by the fact that the men who came in second and third were noticeably flat-footed. But of one thing I am sure: whatever the winner's time it was a record for that particular field in those exact circumstances. I dare say we could have run on rubber if we'd wanted to, bouncing along like so many wallabies: we just didn't happen to see any point in it, that's all, and history will prove us right. Because the order of finishing would have been precisely the same, and that's what matters.

The New Mayhew

"The New Mayhew," the series of studies of people and places by Ronald Searle and Alex Atkinson, will be resumed next week.



Time Remembered

"'END OF AN ERA' FOR THE PRESS—
'SEVERELY TESTED' BY NEW CONDITIONS"
The Times

ERAS are always either beginning or ending;
An era merely here can be fairly rare:
And nothing brings the end of an era nearer
Than someone's suddenly seeing the thing is there.

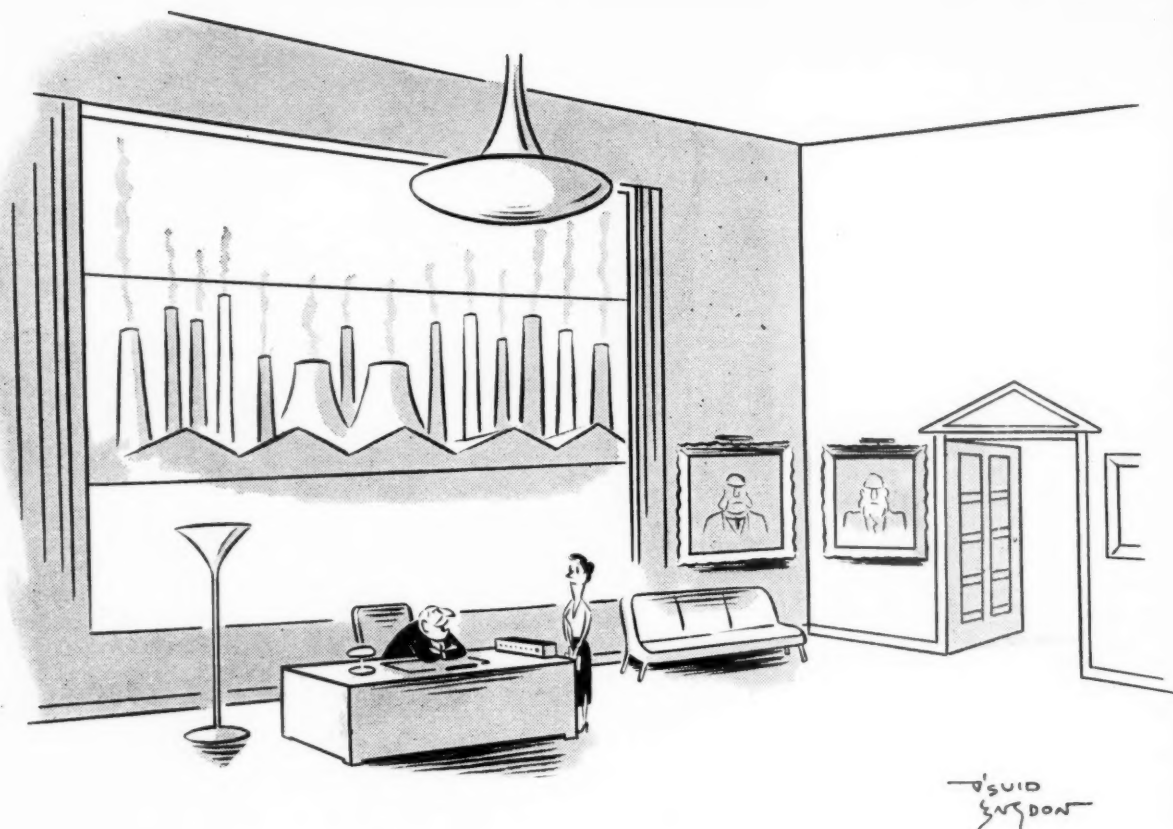
Epochs are mainly made. Cricket, for instance,
Or art, or radio had at times to adopt
Its Lock, Baroque or Ludwig Koch epoch,
Which is not here, but never visibly stopped.

Clearly an era may be a sheer chimera,
An epoch purely *ad hoc*: but each appears
Mainly subjective. Shocks tend to make epochs
And eras tend to end on the strength of fears.

Take your epoch accordingly by the forelock,
Tax your time-reaction to comprehend
An era freely renewable, like Hera,
Just for the fun of bringing it to an end.

As for the end of an era which severely
Tested the best of a progressive press,
This, being clearly a year ago or nearly,
Need not now occasion us much distress.

P. M. HUBBARD



"I wonder whether anyone in Administration knows anyone who knows a bench-hand who will know if we're on Labour's list for take-over."

Candidus and the Pets

By LORD KINROSS

"THESE animals are being fattened for eating?" Candidus inquired as he looked around the hall.

"Certainly not."

"Then they are sacred animals?"

"All animals in this country are sacred."

Almighty and sleek, the animals reclined in glass cases, aloofly asleep or regarding, with a lofty gaze from their gem-bright eyes, the obsequious attendants, who tied ribbons round their necks and combed and preened their luxuriant coats of fur.

"This then is some kind of a temple?" asked Candidus.

"No. It is the Horticultural Hall."

"Horticultural? Do you then worship flowers as well?"

"Certainly. Last week it was

chrysanthemums. You would have observed that their great petals were groomed and curled with an attention just as reverent. This week it is cats, as you see."

"The sacred animals, I observe, are being offered libations of milk. Some of them too are toying with votive offerings."

"Plastic mice, yes."

"Those vessels which they use for their toilet are, of course, made of silver."

"Possibly."

"And there are prizes for all—these rosettes and so forth?"

"For all. Each has his own especial attribute."

"The worshippers seem most devoted. Some of them look as though they were trying to get into the sacred cages."

"They would like to do so doubtless. But gods have claws."

Candidus began to browse through the catalogue. "In addition to your native cults," he commented, "I note that you practise a number of foreign ones. Here are Siamese, Burmese, Abyssinian, Persian idols. Why"—he looked up sharply—"there are Russian ones too."

"Blue Russian," I reassured him.

"You have, I see, an extensive mythology of traditional names and genealogies, as in other pantheons, moreover affiliated to them—especially to the oriental cults, and to the Greek ones. Here, for example, are Summerfield Jupiter, Spotlight Adonis, Gracefield Mercury, Mossa Aphrodite. Cleopatra comes into it too. Some, on the other hand, are clearly indigenous to

these islands—the Seasprites, the Pixies, the Donald Ducks. Also the ones allied to the flower-cults—Fabula Sweet William and Magyar Hyacinth and Gracefield Wallflower. It seems also that these cat-gods are sometimes given the names of other animals, or even of birds. Here is a Peacock, for example, and a Finch, and a Marmoset and a breed of pony. An interesting form of transference. I note, by the way, that the idols may be purchased."

"Yes. They are our Lares and Penates. Gods of the Hearth. To each man his own god. To each god his own man."

"They have much power over the home?"

"Absolute. They occupy the place of honour in it—the largest armchair, by the hearth. Their every whim has to be obeyed. They monopolize conversation. They rule the movements of the household—whether, for example, the family goes on a journey or stays at home."

"And the gods reward this devotion?"

"Far from it. They are proud and remote, as gods should be. Worship of them is its own reward."

"They are not then human-lovers?"

"Look in their eyes and judge."

Turning over the pages of the catalogue, Candidus continued: "A number of these Olympians, I notice, are neuters. You neutralize in this way all the beasts you revere?"

"Not our dogs, no."

"And why is that?"

"Because men revere dogs in their own image, not as a separate species, as they revere cats. They would not do anything to a dog that they wouldn't do to themselves."

"Dogs then are not gods?"

"Certainly they are. But it is a mutual godliness. The man is a god to the dog as the dog is to the man. He invests the dog with all his own attributes. He teaches the dog to love him, as he loves himself. Theirs is a harmonious relationship, in which both parties aspire to please."

"Like marriage?"

"Unlike marriage."

"The man then gives his love to the dog?"

"Well, more than to any human. He has infinite societies for the dog's welfare and protection, such as he does not have for humans."

"As I understand the nature of your bestiary, then, the cat is the power-god and the dog is the love-god. What then is the horse?"

"He is the friend. The Friend of Man."

"He performs all the obligations of friendship?"

"Certainly. He carries the man on his back. He bears his burdens for him. He engages in sports and other such antics for his amusement."

"You do not then eat your horses, any more than you eat your cats and dogs?"

"Only a little more."

"But you eat the foxes which you kill with your dogs?"

"No. The dogs eat them."

"And what of those other, wilder

beasts that you keep in cages in the Zoo? You revere them too?"

"Certainly."

"That is why you keep them in cages?"

"Of course. Out of consideration for them. Do not humans keep themselves in cages?"

"It would be true then to say that, as a people, you revere all animals?"

"Perfectly true."

"Even the ones you fatten for eating?"

"Those above all."

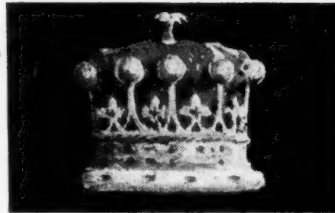
"LAS VEGAS.—Film actress Jayne Mansfield had her £1,785 mink stolen while she was posing for publicity pictures . . ."
Daily Mail

Some people have all the luck.

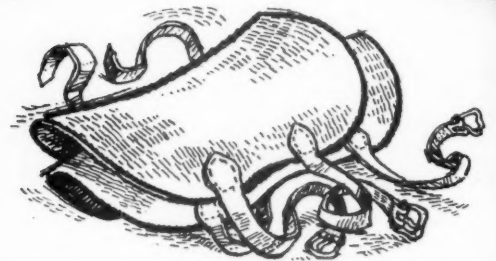
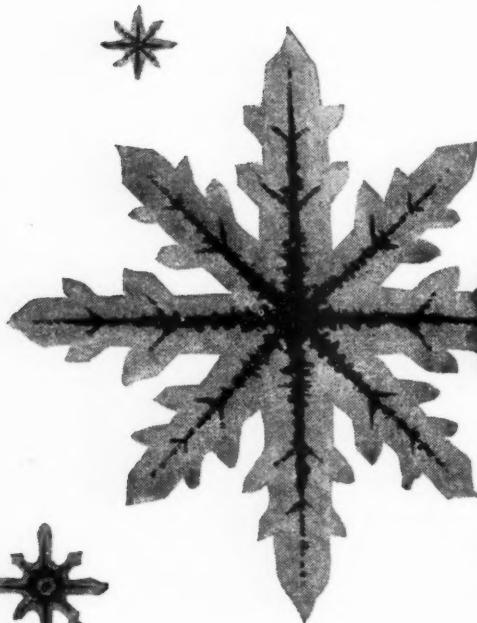


"Anything else, sir? . . . razor blades . . . hair cream . . . after-shave lotion?"

What Could be more acceptable this Christmas than one of the new Government Life-Peerages? In all Party finishes, complete with built-in vote. Last a lifetime. Obtainable only from H.M. Government.



An Original Present: these genuine Thatchers' Knee-pads from Gloucestershire. *De vigueur* in the contemporary kitchen—wear them with your Genuine Butcher's Apron when cleaning the gas-stove. All the rage with *New Yorker* readers. 55/- a pair in Corm, Straw or Verdigris.



Is Yo
on top?
Kipiece r
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make him
Individually fit

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING GU

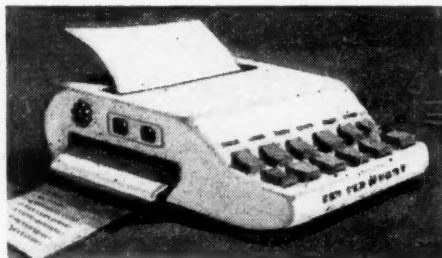
A Boon for the hostess with the small flat, dehydrated champagne is obtainable at 26/- a packet, or 50/- for the magnum economy size, at Oblomov's. You just pour on water. Bottles can be hired at slight extra cost.



Some fun stories a the courtes must be Hence: the Pagliacci, gramophone cassette, cealed in a hair, tie, which plays of lau touch of a witch when crack is read.



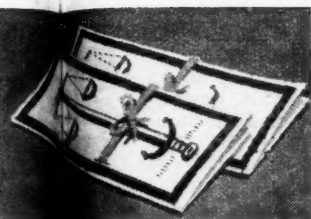
Modern Children will love the Nye Bevan doll. When "Ban the H-bomb" is shouted at the diaphragm in front, it will oscillate from left to right. Price 35/- at all reputable toy-shops, batteries extra. From the same range comes the "Secstate" Playball—you never know where it is going to bounce next. Made of indestructible plastic. With smiling Dulles face, 7/-; or with scowling face, 6/-.



Perhaps you find writing thank-you letters a bore. ELGAR (Electronic Letterwriter for Gifts Annually Received) solves the problem. Feed in the appropriate data, e.g. Aunt, Cousin, tie, cigarettes, and the right letter comes out in a matter of moments. Service and maintenance laid on by the makers, Elgar Variations Ltd.



The Newest in softies, this cuddly woolly octopus squirts real ink when squeezed. It costs 8 guineas. Toyfair, Ltd.



Book Tokens, record tokens . . . and now Law Tokens. If you have a friend who is contemplating an action, here is the ideal present. From Temple Novelties Ltd., they come in various denominations from 6/8d. to 500 guineas.

Is Your Kitten thin on top? Buy him a Kitpiece real mink wig from Selvidge's and make him happy again. Individually fitted, from 7 gns.

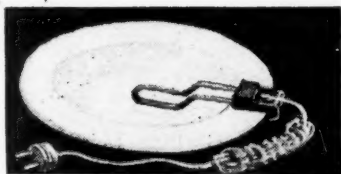
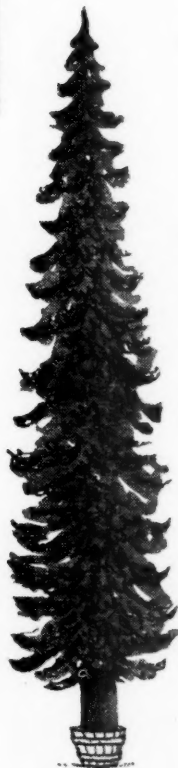


NG GUIDE

Some fun stories are not, but the courtesy must be maintained. Hence the Pagliacci, a minute harmonophone casket, easily concealed in hair, tie, or pocket, which plays a laugh at the touch of a switch when the merry track is read.



Why Not surprise the indoor gardener by giving him one of these attractive dwarf Wellingtonias, £2 10s. from most nurseries? Fully grown they stand no more than 26 feet.

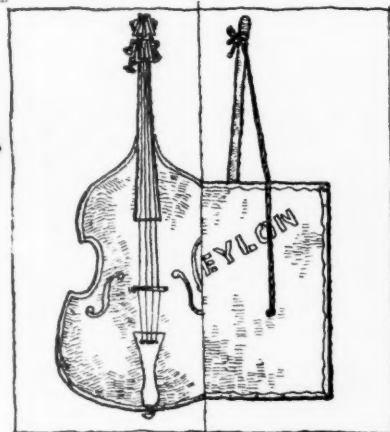


Perhaps you know someone who cannot find room in her dining-room for a full-sized hotplate. These tiny immersion-heaters, specially designed for soup-plates, are the answer. They come from Coolland's and cost 3 gns. a set. Specify thick or clear when ordering.



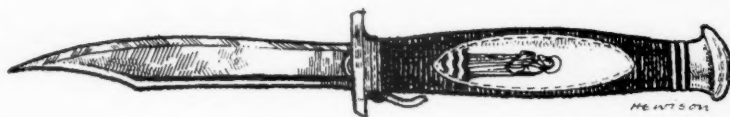
Among the younger kiddies the Magic Handbell is sure to be popular. It is made of brass, with a wooden handle, and gives an amusingly cracked sound. Obtainable only at the Conservative Central Office in Westminster, price 21/-

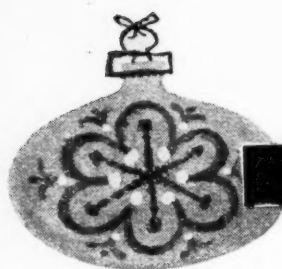
Genuine Double-Basses, suitable for taking apart and reassembling to look like tea-chests. Ideal for skiffle enthusiasts. On the expensive side —40 gns. and upwards, from the Rock-Me Skiffle Mart.



"Petricopper" will preserve Baby's first booties for all time. Just send the booties to any Petricopper agent, and in a week they will be returned, petrified in shining copper, with every well-loved wrinkle and blemish faithfully retained. Price according to size.

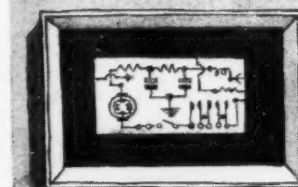
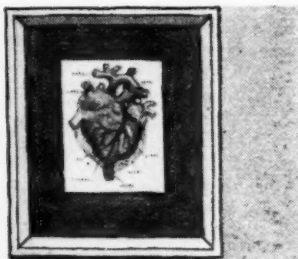
Every Teddy Boy has to carry a flick-knife nowadays, and all the smartest Teddies are wearing a St. Christopher medal. So isn't this new St. Christopher flick-knife the very thing for your Teddy Boy friend?



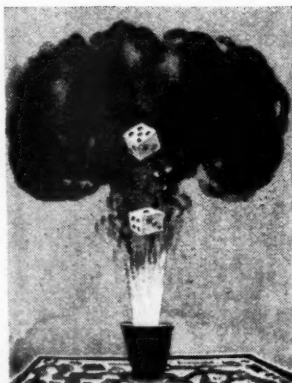


CHRISTMAS SHOPPING GUIDE

Make it a hilariously happy Christmas with the Bomb Game. You can have all the fun of international diplomacy at your own fireside. Played with counters, dice, imitation fissionable material and little cardboard men with removable heads. The winner is either the player who makes the biggest bomb first or the one who makes the smallest bomb last.



As a change from vintage-car blue-prints, Seal's have introduced two new ranges. The Medical Series gives accurate full-colour drawings of the more popular diseases; and the Electrical Circuit Series, which, printed in complementary colours, have about them a gay echo of Klee. They can be obtained singly at 32/6d. a print (framed from 4 gns.) or in complete sets of eight, 12 gns. unframed, £33 12s. framed.



If your dog looks as though he is in danger of becoming space-borne, give him a bottle of Cripps fattening pills for Christmas and make sure he is over the economic pay-load. All dogs love them and all good chemists stock them.



These book-ends made in the likeness of Burgess and Maclean are just the thing to add a little touch of the unexpected to your bachelor uncle's bookshelves. At all good stationers, twelve roubles.

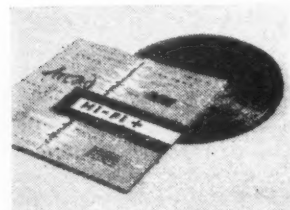
Books always make acceptable presents. Among best-sellers certain to please this year are *Jewels from Churchill* (for your military uncle struggling with his memoirs); *The Complete Guide to Colin Wilson*, containing all his cleverest sayings translated into English and indexed with details of who said it first; *Wit and Wisdom*



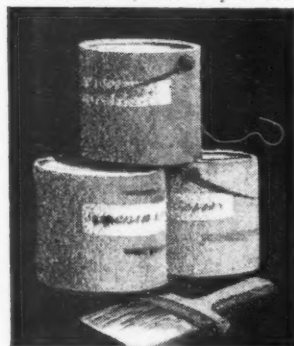
of Dr. Charles Hill, in one slim volume; and *The Golden Treasury of Anonymous Letters*, edited by Lord Altrincham. Among the most popular of the new novels are *Strange Society*, by Julian Gaskell, aged 13, and *The Passionate Pelican*, by Kathleen Flanagan, aged 12.



No Hi-fi fan can afford to be without this new disc from the Arcad catalogue which, recorded with the help of an electronic computer, contains every possible combination of sounds and so does away with the need for a large record library.



Government-surplus white-wash is the handy two-gallon cans is the ideal present for your striker friend, Communist Party member, or League of Empire Loyalist. It is the same quality as is used by the Government for covering ministerial leaks. Stencils of all the better-known slogans are available, but if you are



not sure of your friend's convictions, "Rally Trafalgar Square Saturday" will be found suitable for almost anything.

We have not been able to cover a twentieth of all the exciting things to be seen in the shops this Christmas. If there is anything you are specially interested in, write a postcard giving brief particulars and address it to "Santa Claus, The North Pole," and don't forget that foreign postage has gone up this year!



'Fla

(And why shouldn't PUNCH have its say in this disorderly debate?)

By MAMMON

THE symptoms of 'fla (I'm sick and tired of the word inflation) are not unlike those of 'flu. There is a rapid rise in temperature, a rush of blood to the head producing extreme coldness in the extremities, and dangerous fever.

There is a tendency for the sufferer to become delirious. Illusions of grandeur and black despair chase each other across his brain like the shadows of storm clouds. He is apt to sample all the quick remedies of Dr. Dodah, Professor Watsit, and Uncle Hugo . . . But he feels no better. He may even take to the bottle.

But sooner or later, if he is to survive, he has to face the fact that he is a sick man. He listens to reason, and begins to sweat the 'fla out of his system. It's the only way.

We in Britain have been suffering from 'fla for years. At first the disease was mild—a touch of fever, a swollen head. Then it became chronic. It is becoming lethal.

Even now we are not taking the matter seriously enough. Some of our economists tell us that this isn't real 'fla, that we needn't worry. It's something we can't avoid, something picked up from a crate of infected imports. It's not really 'fla at all, they say, merely growing pains. Don't sweat it out, they say, sweating is weakening, and we may all perish in the resultant flood.

Clever modern men argue fiercely about what 'fla is, and seldom agree. Some of them are prepared to accept, with qualifications and riders, the statement that 'fla occurs when too much money chases too few goods; but it is simpler, surely, to say that 'fla means rapidly rising prices—costs and prices rising uncomfortably and dangerously.

'Fla is dangerous because it kills confidence in our ability to manage our affairs properly. It ruins the foreigner's confidence in our money, in our capacity to deliver the goods, in our strength as an industrial power. It ruins our own confidence in ourselves: we're a pretty poor lot, surely, if we allow artificial things like money and prices to knock the steam out of us.

'Fla is also unfair. Rising prices affect everybody, but not equally. The weakest, the young, the old, and those

without industrial and commercial power suffer most. The young suffer because education and social services suffer: educational grants, family allowances and other doles made to youth all buy less than was originally intended. The old suffer because pensions never keep pace with rising prices, and because hard-earned savings are pilfered by the plague of 'fla. People who work at salaried jobs, in the professions and the services, suffer because they lack the bargaining power to keep their pay moving in step with prices.

The strong suffer not at all—at first. While the going is good both sides of industry do pretty well at the expense of the rest of the community. Employees push in repeated pay-claims, and employers make repeated upward adjustments of their prices. Employees and employers go up together in an express lift, and all other ranks plod wearily up the stairs.

During each of the last ten years wage rates in terms of money have increased over the previous year by an average of 5.7 per cent. In 1948 they went up 6 per cent, then in succeeding years by 3, 1, 8, 8, 5, 5, 7, 8, and 6 per cent. Earnings (or take-home pay) have risen by 7.2 per cent per annum over this period. But of course a large part of these gains has been lost through 'fla, rising prices. If we think of take-home pay in terms of goods—what the wage-earner can buy with his money—then wages have increased by about 2.6 per cent per annum over the ten years, by 4.1 per cent per annum over the last five years. This real annual increase in pay has given employees what amounts to the whole of our increase in production. The national loaf of industrial output has grown, and wage-earners have won all the extra slices. And in addition they have been granted very substantial real benefits by the extension of the social services.

Profits during these

ten years have also risen, though the amounts paid out as dividend on shares, in most industries, have been cut to ribbons by heavy taxation and by the practice of converting profit into new plant, machinery and research facilities.

Take a longer view of the wages-profits comparison. Incomes derived from profits, interest and rent have gone up by 75 per cent since 1938: wages have risen by 400 per cent. And since prices are up about 300 per cent on 1938 it is obvious that the savers' and investors' share of the loaf has been marked down very severely.

So what? Was the old pre-war share-out sacrosanct and pre-ordained? Is it wrong that wage-earners should get more and others less? No, of course not. A revision of the share-out was long overdue. The country needed it, demanded it, and anyone with half an eye can see the material and social advantages of our more equitable distribution of the national income: Look at the children of the industrial towns. Look inside the homes of the wage-earners.

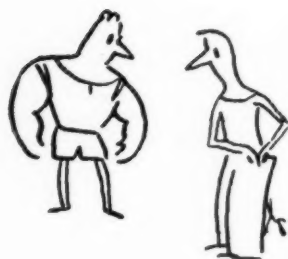
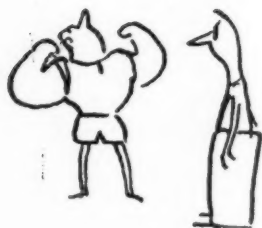
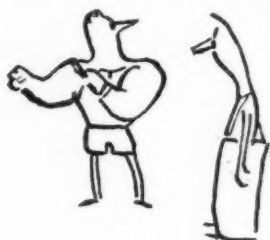
'Fla is not dangerous because it has developed concurrently with this dramatic change in the wage-earner's status. On the contrary, it is dangerous because it threatens the very existence of the new social order. Lord Chandos made this abundantly clear when he suggested a new wage agreement guaranteeing the workers an annual increase



"He wants you to take him for a walk."

of 2½ per cent for five years. His idea may or may not be practical, but it is evidence enough of his acute anxiety about the future of our industrial power and our revitalized social structure. And Lord Chandos's anxiety is echoed—on both sides of the industrial fence—by everyone capable of understanding the facts of our economic situation.

Rapidly rising costs can be passed on



to customers at home: they *cannot* be passed on to customers overseas. The results of 'fla in the home market are very serious—the public becomes disillusioned and embittered, saving (on which we rely for new capital, housing, roads, factories, machines, education and research) is discouraged, planning comes unstuck and the whole pattern of industrial activity becomes chaotic and uneconomic. The results of 'fla in export prices are disastrous. Overseas we are in competition with highly efficient industrial nations like Germany, Japan and the U.S.A., and we cannot sell our goods if our prices are too stiff. If we lose our exports we cannot buy imports. We run short of raw materials. Our factories close down. We return to the grim days of unemployment. We go hungry. And if this should happen all the improvements of the new social order vanish into thin cold air.

Economic illiterates (and there are plenty of them among employers and employees) read that the pound sterling is in trouble, and couldn't care less. A flight from the pound means to them a flight from someone else's pound, not from the pounds they have in their pocket or in the bank. Such men are dangerous; by their blindness, ignorance or complacency they are hindering the country in its job of facing hard facts. A flight from the pound means quite simply a loss of confidence overseas in Britain's capacity to earn her living and her way in the world. It means trouble ahead—big trouble. For all of us.

To promote 'fla by profiteering or making unjustifiable wage claims is now an act of economic sabotage.

Like 'flu, 'fla has a nasty habit of being followed by a state of acute depression.

One Sentence

(To celebrate the appearance of Swann's Way as a Penguin)

AND yet it is almost impossible not to wonder what, on readers who have become accustomed to, if indeed they were not "brought up on," the colloquial brevities of all those novelists influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the early work of Mr. Hemingway (some of whose later work, it must be admitted, has become almost "Jamesian" in the leisurely trundle of its language, and cannot be held in any such way responsible), will be the effect of a book so full of sentences which, lovingly constructed by the translator on the sometimes diaphanous but perhaps more often pedestrian model of those in the original, welcome the reader in with a deceptive smile of simplicity, as this one did, only to proceed in undulations which it is tempting, although it would be unkind, to call soporific, and by way of successive analogies so subtle and evocative and drawn from so many different branches of human activity that by the time the eye has traversed the first few lines of one the mind is already in no less complicated a state of nostalgia than that of one reading at the same time several family diaries and a file of newspapers, analogies often so strange and unexpected that one might suspect many of them, as I still do, to have been

thought of and kept in reserve until the apparently natural emergence, in the course of some reflection, of a situation or phenomenon in the explaining of which they might without obvious contrivance be introduced, each setting off a string of parenthetical clauses, all most scrupulously completed and quite unexceptionable in grammatical construction, as an aeroplane flying at a great height across the cloudless blue of a summer afternoon will always and inevitably trail a scarf, of which the pilot knows nothing, intangible and impermanent but none the less quite definite in outline, of ground-level sneezes; a book which when the first Penguins made their appearance it would have been considered the very height of absurdity to include among them, and for which even on its eventual inclusion twenty-two years later (for it is often forgotten how comparatively recent, not to say "within living memory," is the institution in this country of the easily "pocketable" book in its paper or, more accurately, thin pasteboard cover) it is necessary for the eager purchaser to pay no less than twelve times as much as would have procured him a copy of some reprinted novel, however trivial by comparison, in 1935.

RICHARD MALLETT

Concluding—

I LIKE IT HERE

by Kingsley Amis

"ANYWAY, you made it."

"Oh yes, I made it all right. I practically had to beat the doctor up to convince him I was serious. Then coming back I kept nearly knocking chaps down arrayed in traditional peasant costume, on their way to market I suppose. It was still pitch dark, or moonlight, rather."

"Let's go in." When they were settled at their table Bennie Hyman said: "And how was old Buckmaster when you left him? Funny thing, I can't seem to get out of the habit of calling him that."

"Neither can I. Oh, he was in pretty good shape, considering; quite perky and talking like mad. Apparently he hadn't broken his leg, or not properly. The doctor explained it all to me in Portuguese. He got a nurse in the morning after it happened."

"I suppose he was all over you after that night."

"You don't know the half of it, boy. Do you know, he wanted me to write a book about him? Oh yes, the chauffeur turned up again, by the way, looking as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. Strether chucked him out of the house straight away. Made him cry."

"Extraordinary business, all that. Ah, good morning, Fred."

"Good morning, Mr. Hyman. Good morning, sir."

When they had ordered, Hyman said: "Thank you for your cable, by the way—the second one, I mean. What put you on to things?"

"It was just something that happened when he and I were having a look at Fielding's tomb."

"Cripes, you did have a cultural time, didn't you?"

"He said he thought he was better than Fielding, you see. He'd carried on in the same sort of way, before, explaining he was part of the history of the English novel and all the rest of it, but this was really the pay-off. The way I looked at it, if he was a fake he'd have to be a pretty bright chap, about how people behave, I mean, and how people expect great writers to behave and so on. Because he'd fooled everybody up to then, myself included—I mean I'd been watching him at close

range for days. Well then, given that sort of intelligence he wouldn't have dared to put himself on show as the kind of prancing, posturing phony who'd say he was better than Fielding. Nothing to be gained by it. And far too much danger of affronting my conception of how great writers behave."

"But don't you in fact expect great writers to be prancing phonies or whatever you said?"

"Of course I do, as far as people of the great-writer period are concerned, that is, that's between . . . when exactly? Well, say roughly between *Roderick Hudson* and about 1930, death of Lawrence and the next bunch all just starting off—Greene, Waugh, Isherwood, Powell. Or perhaps 1939. But you couldn't expect Buckmaster to know I saw it like that. He'd grown up in that period himself, poor old devil. It couldn't possibly strike him in that way."

"Was that the only thing that put you wise?"

"No, there was something else."

Bowen explained about Lopes and Emilia, omitting as irrelevant, and open to misinterpretation, the language lesson and its sequel. "What I was trying to remember was that this girl had said 'Let us drink' or something *in English*. It was about the only thing she did say in English, perhaps it was the only thing she could say. But Buckmaster had never seen her before and all he knew was that she didn't speak *much* English. Which is a pretty wide concept. She might easily have been able to speak enough to tell me that from what she'd gathered he was a retired chamberpot importer called Higginbotham. He wouldn't have dared let us out of his sight for a moment. Not if he'd been a fake."

"What about this blackmail stunt you thought this fellow Lopes might have been up to? He wouldn't have wanted you to see that, would he, old Buckmaster?"

"Oh, I soon came to the conclusion it couldn't be blackmail. His demeanour didn't seem right for that, especially





"A funny thing happened to me on the way to the theatre to-night . . ."

not afterwards, and from what he said . . . he didn't bother to concoct any sort of story. No, I think he was just afraid of a bit of a dust-up, a dispute over a debt, that kind of thing. He's the sort of chap who hates any, you know, unpleasantness. All through that chauffeur row I could tell he was loathing every minute of it."

Hyman shook his head. "Well, it all sounds rather fine-spun to me. I think you made up your mind you liked the old boy, even if he did bore you and put on this I'm-great-you-see act. And anyhow you were his guest. So you looked round for reasons for thinking he was what he claimed to be."

"My mind doesn't work like that."

"What? You're absolutely hopeless about people you like or who you think like you. People you don't happen to

like never get a bloody chance and the others can get away with murder. They jump on your stomach and you lie there pointing out that their home circumstances were unfortunate."

"Utter rubbish. Who jumps on my stomach?"

"Oh, well . . . you know what I mean. Can I have another look at that photograph?"

Bowen took it out of its envelope and passed it across. It showed Buckmaster some twenty years younger, but unmistakably Buckmaster, sitting awkwardly at a café table opposite a man with a small mouth and an apostolic expression. An inscription in ink mentioned John Wulfstan Strether and sincere friendship.

"We'll get that signature checked, of course," Hyman said. "But it's got

to be genuine, hasn't it? Can't help being. Laurence Binyon. They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old, but they're dead, aren't they? Can you beat it?"

"I had quite a time seeming honoured when he made me a present of that. He did so much want me to have it, it was extraordinary. Well, Bennie, what about it? Do I get that job or not?"

Hyman sighed. "Afraid not, chumbo," he said, blushing slightly. "Old Weinstein was delighted with your bit of special investigation. But he's promised a frightful little failed barrister that he can come in in the autumn. So that's that. I really am sorry."

"That's all right, Bennie, don't you worry."

"I feel very mean about it."

"Well, don't. You did your stuff for me over that landlord business. I saw him last night when I got in. He'd brushed his hair specially and his voice was about half the volume it usually is. What did you do to him?"

"Oh, we got by on abuse and threats, really. He started apologizing as soon as he laid eyes on old Levine. Couldn't blame him. Let me know any time he needs a refresher course."

"I'll do that."

"Mind you do. You're not looking too bright, Garnet."

"Yes, I need a holiday."

"Was it a complete wash-out in Portugal?"

"Oh no, I wouldn't say that. Some of the time it was hardly any worse than it is here. That's when you start thinking you really love it and must come back the first chance you get. I've been thinking it over. I think what it is, there's such a host of things that can go wrong, so many more than there are here, that when you're not actually being eaten up by insects and your guts aren't playing hell with you and an official isn't telling you your papers aren't in order and nobody's putting you right in the picture about the local writers and you've got a decent bed and you aren't writhing about with sunburn and there aren't any smells to speak of and you haven't got to start looking for an hotel and in general you won't have to deal with anybody for the rest of the day and you've got something to read, well then you tell yourself you're having a bloody marvellous

time. And then there's the weather. It does make everything seem romantic, there's no getting away from that. Then when you get home you realize how much you like it here. If that wasn't another thing you knew already, that is."

"The old closed mind, eh?"

"Closed against what? I'm ready for things to happen to me all right, as long as they aren't too nasty. I can't stop them, anyway. But they have got to happen and they have got to happen to me. And by the way I don't object to doing a few things too, just now and then, as well as having them happen to me. But going abroad isn't going to actually help on any of that."

"I seem to remember you telling me about one or two things that happened to you in Portugal."

"Yes, but they weren't specifically abroad things. It would have been quite easy to duplicate my little expedition in search of the doctor in several areas in North Wales, for instance. I know they dress differently there, but people hurt their legs and have to get chaps to help them in much the same way. My God, is that the time? Can you hurry that chap up, do you think?"

"I'm sorry about that job," Hyman said as they were leaving the restaurant. "Really."

"Give it a rest. What about getting drunk one evening?"

"I'll ring you up."

"Fine. Remember me to the family."

They took their leave. Bowen got on his bus. He let himself think for a moment about *Teach Him a Lesson*, which he had read carefully through on the boat and then torn up. It had been bad in the kind of way that he had formerly thought only great writers capable of. But he was going to write something else instead, about a man who was forced by circumstances to do the very thing he most disliked the thought of doing and found out afterwards that he was exactly the same man as he was before. Nobody, nobody at all, was going to hear anything about it until it was finished.

He gazed out of the window. London was looking full of good stuff. Admittedly it, together with most of the rest of the United Kingdom, was the land of Sorry-sir (sorry sir bar's closed sir, sorry sir no change sir, sorry sir too late for lunch sir, sorry sir residents only

sir), but one couldn't expect to win all the time. He found after a moment that he was thinking of Emilia and the wonderful foreign look she had had that nobody had ever told her about. He realized he had not been quite straight with Bennie Hyman, or with himself, about why he had come to the conclusion that Lopes couldn't be blackmailing Strether. It was simply because he had decided that Emilia couldn't be a blackmailer's girl. And he decided that because he had liked Emilia. But of course in spite of that she could be a blackmailer's girl. So perhaps it was true that he let people he liked get away with murder. But what did that matter? What did matter was that Emilia almost certainly was a blackmailer's girl. How sad and horrible that was.

The girl he was going to meet, at any rate, could never conceivably be a blackmailer's girl. That was a big point about her. In fact it was emblematic of the biggest point of all about her, the biggest point there could be about anybody.

A few minutes later the non-black-mailer's girl was hurrying down the platform to meet him. She left Sandra to totter along between the two boys, put her suitcases down and bounded up to him like a little agile tennis-player. They kissed. Bowen had never felt so relieved in his life.

"Oh, boggy," Barbara said. "You look a bit tired."

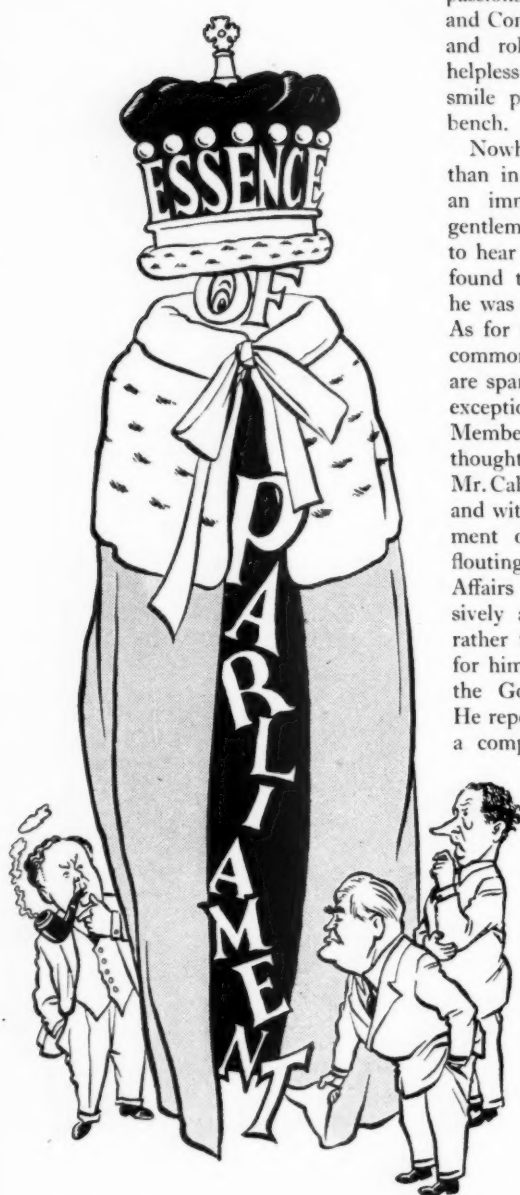
"I'm fine."

"But you're lovely and brown. I think your holiday's done you a lot of good."

THE END

"I Like It Here," *Gollancz*, 13 6, will be published on January 13.





WHY are sausages so much the funniest things in the world? Mr. Norman Dodds had only to demand "a square deal for the sausage" at Monday's Question Time, and the House was off. "My department is already discussing with the Potato Marketing Board arrangements for the import of potatoes, should the import of potatoes become necessary," Mr. Heathcoat Amory had already said, and not an eyebrow was raised. But sausages? "I realize that very deep

passions are aroused on this question," and Conservatives and Socialists rocked and rolled around the Chamber in helpless merriment, while a withering smile passed along even the Liberal bench.

Nowhere was the laughter heartier than in the Strangers' Gallery, where an immensely distinguished coloured gentleman, who had presumably come to hear about the Rhodesian franchise, found to his unconcealed delight that he was hearing about sausages instead. As for the Rhodesian franchise, it is a common complaint that colonial debates are sparsely attended. To-day was the exception. With a three-line whip Members had to come anyway, so they thought that they might as well listen. Mr. Callaghan started off with a moderate and witty speech, accusing the Government of a breach of faith in their flouting of the opinion of the African Affairs Committee. He spoke impressively as if he would allow evidence rather than eloquence to win the case for him. Mr. Alport who followed for the Government was not so happy. He repeated rather too often that it was a complicated question—as indeed it

was—but what was not so certain was whether he himself fully understood the complications. On at least three occasions he got the facts wrong and had to be corrected by the Opposition, and the plea that Lord Colyton was "only making a quick intervention in reply to a point that had been made" was suspiciously like the housemaid's excuse for her ill-timed little baby. However, the Government was satisfactorily set on its legs again, first by that admirable counter-Caesar, Mr. Fletcher-Cooke, who had gone and seen and come back

again, and then by Mr. Lennox-Boyd in the winding-up speech. The African visitor chuckled impartially at every thrust from whichever side it came, and at the end honours were tolerably even. But what was odd about the debate was that, while the issue was whether the Government could fairly be charged with a breach of faith, and opinion outside the House had clearly shown that this was seen as a matter of fact that could not be properly decided by the party line—while Mr. Callaghan appealed

effectively to the condemnation of the Government by the Conservative Bow Group and Mr. Alport to the support of it by the *Manchester Guardian*—not only was there no cross-voting but there was not even any cross-speaking.

The high-spot of the debate was intended to be Mr. Nairn's gesture of tearing up a copy of the *Observer* and scattering the pieces on the floor, but it did not quite come off. Even the African visitor was clearly more puzzled than amused. The House of Commons, whatever it may be, is obviously not a wastepaper-basket, and it has been a general truth ever since the days of Burke that advantage rarely comes of throwing things about there.

Gas and Electricity on Tuesday



Mr. Nabarro

worked out just the other way round to Rhodesia on Monday. Then, in general, it was Nabarro *contra mundum*. This, it need hardly be said, was no embarrassment to Kidderminster's Athanasius, who gaily proclaimed that "the Tories love the nationalized industries better than the Socialists love themselves." The two parties had an electoral race with one another, he thought, as to which could waste money faster, and he was "extremely cross" with the Minister who made his own speech and then, instead of listening to Mr. Nabarro's, went off to—of all places—Europe. And indeed it was true that both sides were united in praising the Gas and Electricity industries—Mr. Maudling and the Conservatives to prove how well they could run a show, and Mr. Robens and the Socialists to prove how well a nationalized show could be run. But, unlike Rhodesia, so far as differences were expressed, those differences cut right across party lines. Socialist Mr. Wilkins and Conservative Admiral Hughes-Hallett thought that the two industries might be merged. Socialist Mr. Palmer thought not. When there is not going to be a division, Members of Parliament can afford to agree and differ across the floor.

Cunning Mr. George Brown thought that he had a neat trap for the Prime Minister when he asked him whether

the armed forces came under the rule that improved pay could only be financed by reduced activities. He did not reckon with the air service back from Paris, and it was Mr. Butler, not Mr. Macmillan, who answered the question. Mr. Butler was not giving anything away, and the House passed on to allow Mr. Gresham Cooke to bring in a bill to say that bicyclists might put reflectors on their pedals. Thus freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent. But Government supporters, I fancy, must have wished that the aeroplane from Paris had been delayed even one day more, so that Mr. Butler, rather than Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, might have had to answer the question about American aircraft from British bases flying about with H-bombs on board. Mr. Lloyd's answer was, roughly, "Your guess is as good as mine."

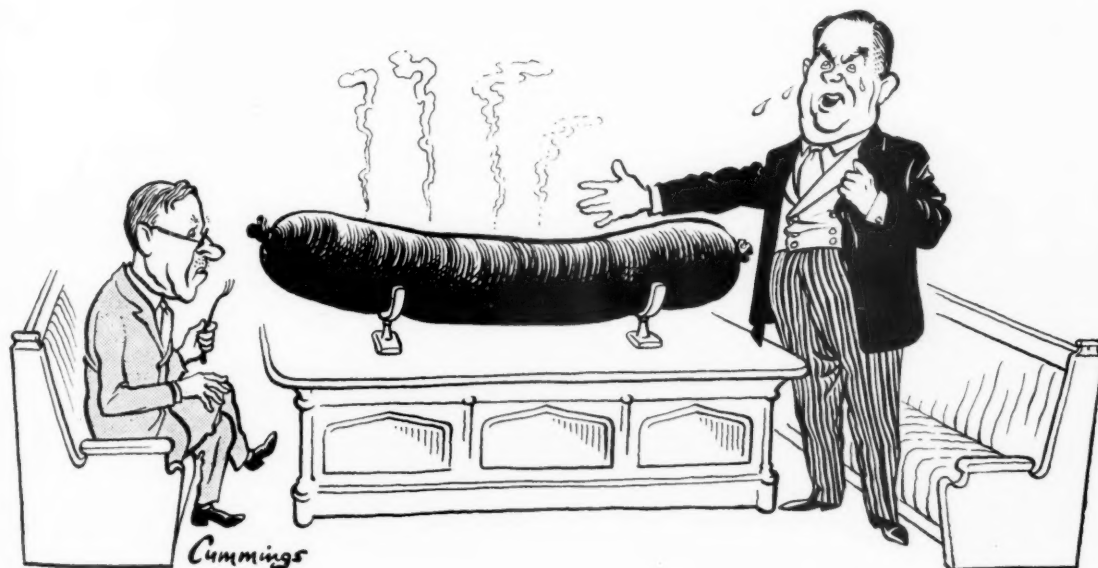
When plots are hatched over the luncheon table at the Guatemalan Legation the plotters set us a constitutional conundrum, explained Mr. Lennox-Boyd. What the delegates from British Honduras say is the business of the Colonial Office, but what the Guatemalan Minister says is the business of the Foreign Office—a nice problem of "Whose finger on the tap?"

Meanwhile sixty Socialists upstairs were—in defiance, it seems, of Mr.

Gaitskell's advice—concocting a motion to censure the Government for trying to prevent arbitrators from giving their awards "on the merits of such claims." If only they could tell exactly how "merit" should be determined! The egalitarian can assess merit by the crude test that anyone who is getting more than the average is getting too much. Hamlet assesses it by the yet cruder test of "Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?" But it is precisely for the formula that will assess merit that those of us who are neither Hamlets nor egalitarians are so desperately searching.

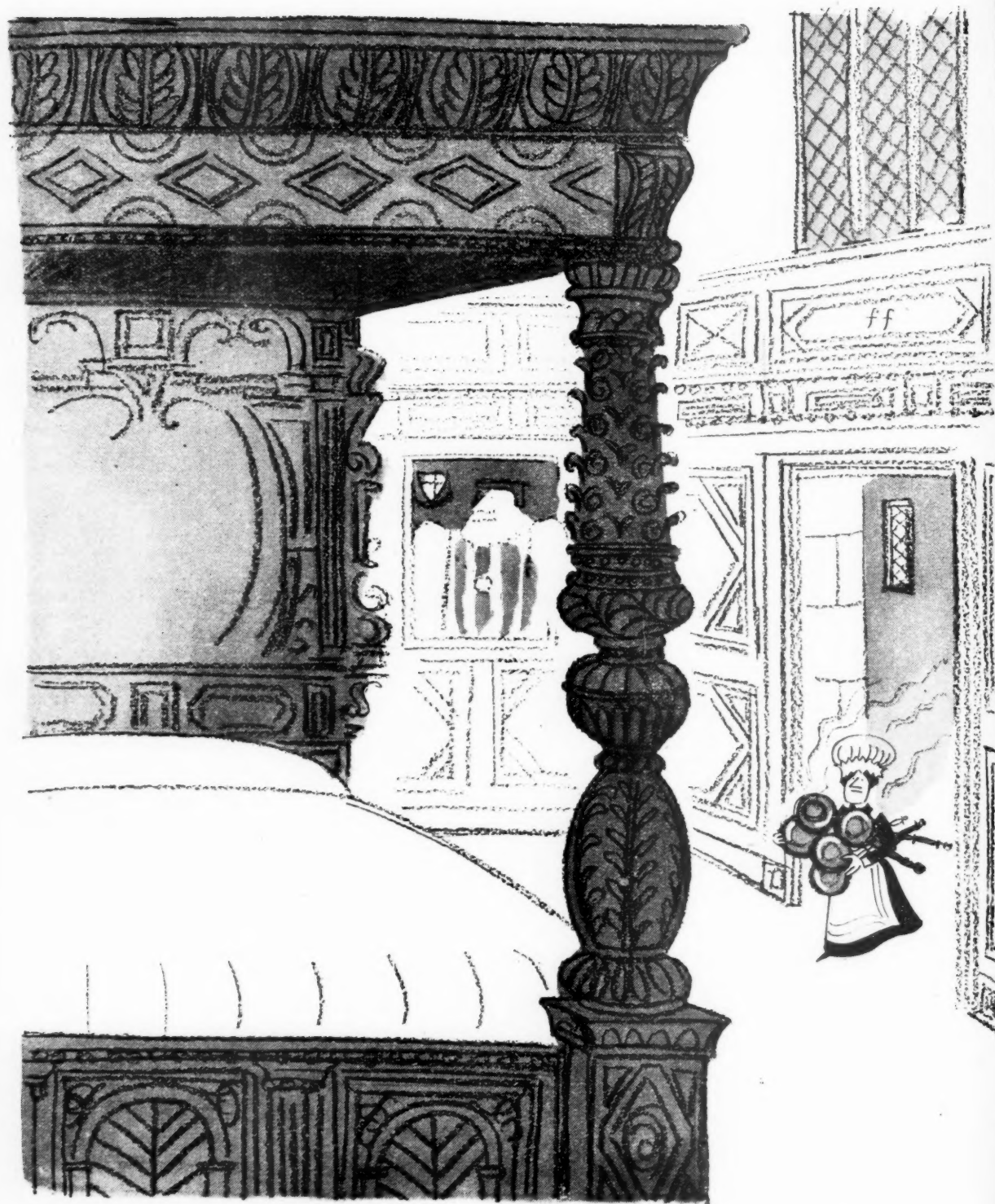
The House was able to agree unanimously on Thursday that a monument to Lord Balfour should be erected "at the public charge," nor was any cynic found to cast a glance at the wire-strewn Arab-Israel frontier and to murmur "*Si monumentum requiris circumspice*," but when it came to the New Towns Bill Mr. Woodburn from the Socialist Front Bench complained that the Government had not done enough amenity building—too few petrol pumps and cinemas; which was all very odd since it was only two weeks ago that Mr. Harold Wilson was complaining from the Socialist Front Bench that the cause of inflation was that the Government had done too much luxury building—too many petrol pumps and cinemas.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS



Mr. Heathcoat Amory

Mr. Dodds



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In the City

Swing and Roundabout

IN New York just after the war I became acquainted with a gadget called Personal Music. It was a miniature juke-box, so contrived that its delivery of decibels was restricted to one table, one little dinner party. I liked "personal music" and ever since I have wondered about its progress. The idea has not, I think, penetrated to this side of the Atlantic curtain; and after sampling—involuntarily—the fare emitted by half a dozen of the eight thousand or so ordinary impersonal juke-boxes now operating in Britain I find myself regretting an apparent hiatus in cultural relations.

My dislike of the juke-box is partly due to its tendency to be preoccupied by loud nasal rock 'n' roll and partly to its aesthetic shortcomings. I am prepared to admit however that rock 'n' roll and ebullient chromium may seem less offensive to people with vested interests in the gramophone records industry, to people with (say) shares in Decca or Electric and Musical Industries (E.M.I.). The juke-boxes consume about one million records a year and provide free advertisement for the forty-fives (micro-groove 45 r.p.m. discs) which are rapidly becoming the best sellers of the gramophone records manufacturing companies.

The old familiar shellac 78 r.p.m. records, played on old familiar gramophones, continue to earn the records business its bread-and-butter. Nearly half the gramophones in the country cannot play forty-fives or thirty-threes, and sixty-five per cent of all the records sold last year circulate at the fast, old-fashioned speed of father's day.

Pop records, seventy-eights or forty-fives, account for more than eighty per cent of all sales, and to some extent they subsidize the reproduction of classical music which now sells very largely on long-play thirty-threes costing thirty shillings and upwards. What the producers lose on the roundabouts of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Co., they make up on the swing.

There is fierce competition to find best-selling pops records that somehow find their way into the Top Ten rating of Tin Pan Alley. A record selling twenty-five thousand copies breaks even; one selling by the million pulls in fat profits for all concerned, the manufacturer, the retailer, the artist (2d., perhaps, on every disc) and his agents. At present the chief contenders in the struggle for supremacy are the records of Decca labelled Brunswick, London, R.C.A., and so on, and E.M.I.'s records from the Capitol, Columbia, M.G.M., H.M.V. and Parlophone stables, but other challengers (Pye is one) are coming up with a rush. A dozen manufacturers at least are after the big money—



On the Touchline

Lost Cause?

FOR a really crushing win by Oxford in the University Match one has to go back to the days of Ronnie Poulton (35—3 in 1909, and 19—0 in 1911). The number of Cambridge men still smarting under those defeats must be getting fairly small. But there are plenty of middle-aged Oxford supporters about who had to endure those two terrible years, 1925 and 1926, when the Cambridge score reached the thirties, not to mention 1934 when (at 29—4) it was hardly more consoling. Year after year, with ever renewed hope, they have waited to see these humiliations eased by the spectacle of a Cambridge team repeatedly lining up in a dispirited way behind their own goal line. In vain. The biggest Oxford margin since 1911 has been 13 points.

Any Oxford man who thinks that perhaps next Tuesday will be the long-awaited day ought to be able to move mountains in his spare time. A wiser attitude, not nobler but wiser, would be to submerge the narrower loyalties and concentrate on the interests of the game as a whole. The plain fact is that it is desirable that the kind of football Cambridge are playing this year should win matches. They play to the wings. They believe, that is to say, in getting

£20 million this year—which teenagers are paying annually for their pops.

The affairs of Decca and E.M.I. are not, of course, in one bottom trusted, and it is impossible to calculate current positions in the records race from share prices and profit figures. The ordinary shares of both companies look very healthy, and the fact that yields are still relatively low indicates that a large number of investors have faith in growth prospects and the continuing prosperity of the pops business.

More and more music shops are converting their records counters into self-service departments. You select your label, retire to a listening-post or sweat-box, and get in the groove.

MAMMON

* * *

the ball into the hands of a wing three-quarter while he is still ten or fifteen yards from his opposite number. With wings as good as A. R. Smith and R. J. N. Leonard, that may be a fairly obvious policy to adopt; but to make it work is not so easy. The halves must be capable of getting the ball out like lightning, before the defence can come up. The centres must relinquish their dreams of personal glory in favour of an almost absurdly early pass. Anybody who saw their game against the Harlequins will agree that Cambridge have such halves and centres. In a University match quick, early passing is doubly important; it saves the fly-half and centres from those fearsome crash tackles that can put an attacking team out of joint in the first few minutes.

Oxford may pin their hopes on denying Cambridge the ball, and in the tight scrums they may well do it. But the Cambridge pack are alarmingly quick on the ball in the loose, and get it back when they most need it. Oxford are no bad side, with centres in Phillips and Watts who take some stopping, but it does look as if their excellent "back row" will have to cover many a weary mile in defence.

The great thing, from Oxford's point of view, is that all prophecy about the University Match is invariably futile. I open an old Official Programme and read, with comfort, "I still feel that the 'Varsity match is the wrong game if you want to see a really open game with the ball flung about, with unorthodox movements, with the ball passing through ten pairs of hands before a try is scored." When Mr. Peter Cranmer wrote that he must have felt on fairly safe ground. Only he wrote it in the programme of the Brace-Smith match in 1955.

H. F. ELLIS



BOOKING OFFICE The Great Leacock

The Bodley Head Leacock. Edited by J. B. Priestley. The Bodley Head, 20/-

STEPHEN LEACOCK (1869-1944) was an immensely popular writer when I was at school, and all kind of scraps of his phraseology remain in my mind from reading him at about the age of fifteen. At that time I knew them all, but since then I do not think I have opened a Leacock book until now, so I came to the present selection with a sense of great interest as to how Leacock would stand up to the years.

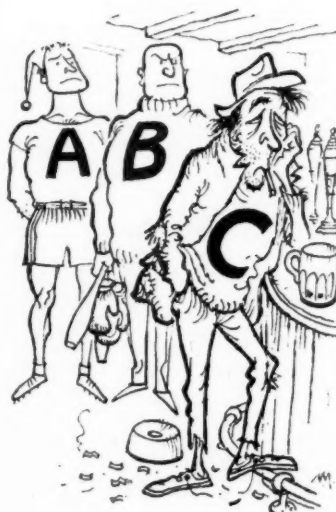
Let it be said at once that Leacock stands up extremely well. At his own specialized level he possesses real originality and is in the top class. Much of his writing is of course closely related to other contemporary comic writing of the same sort, but from time to time he strikes a purely personal note which shows him to be the forerunner of much comic writing of our own day.

Mr. J. B. Priestley in his introduction to this volume sees Leacock as a characteristically Canadian humorist (he was a professor at McGill University in Montreal) in whom the savage wit of North America merges with the more poetic nonsense of England. There is much to be said for this view, and there can also be little doubt that Leacock paved the way in this country for the appreciation of *The New Yorker* and the popularity here of many American humorous writers of the last few decades.

On the other hand Leacock has nothing in common with that almost paranoiac approach of an American humorous writer like Mark Twain. Leacock's humour derives largely from humility, a quality still rare in all American writing, although perhaps now more domesticated in the United States than formerly; and accordingly appearing more freely in the country's literature.

Mr. Priestley covers himself completely in his selection by confessing that he has sought only to please his own

taste in what he has chosen. This is the only sane way of making a collection of this sort, because it ensures that nothing is included which somebody thinks that somebody else might think good: the most hopeless of all criteria. There is no argument about what people think funny. I will therefore do no more than state brutally that I find Mr. Priestley



utterly and absolutely wrong in excluding nearly all the literary and dramatic burlesques, and that the omission of *Gertrude the Governess* (which with others I re-examined) seems to me, if not a blunder, certainly a major crime.

The *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town*, *Impressions of London*, and in general the discursive, descriptive pieces are done with great ease and charm, but become after a time a trifle mechanical. Leacock was a Tory and disliked—with good reason—the way education in his day seemed to be going. He was deeply interested in his profession, and has good stuff to say on the subject. He disapproved of the invasion of the universities by women. "I spent three years in the graduate school of Chicago, where co-educational girls were as

thick as autumn leaves—and some thicker." All the same this side of Leacock is far removed from his true brilliance.

His approach may be more usefully examined in *The Awful Fate of Melpomenus Jones*, the instructive study of a man—a curate—too shy to leave after coming to tea. Jones just continued to stay in his host's house, week after week, endlessly looking through the photograph albums. "He was," says the author, "too modest to tell a lie, and too religious to wish to appear rude." (Note this extremely sophisticated form of the transferred epithet.)

Perhaps the funniest item remains *A, B, and C: the human element in mathematics*. Here, it will be remembered, our attention is drawn to these three characters (sometimes assisted by a fourth, D) who are described, sometimes mysteriously as "doing a piece of work," sometimes investing their capital, sometimes in recreation, racing, bicycling or swimming. "Poor C is an undersized, frail man, with a plaintive face. Constant walking, digging and pumping have broken his health and ruined his nervous system. His joyless life has driven him to drink and smoke more than is good for him, and his hand often shakes as he digs ditches. He has not the strength to work as the others can; in fact, as Hamlin Smith has said, 'A can do more work in one hour than C in four.'" The analysis of this situation could not be better done. I had to stop reading it in the train as the rest of the compartment began to look uneasy.

ANTHONY POWELL

A Clydeside Lad

Scotland the Brave. Iain Hamilton. Michael Joseph, 16/-

Mr. Hamilton is commendably anxious not to sentimentalize his early life, described here up to the age of seventeen. He gives us the terrors of a Scottish elementary school, the shabby discomforts of industrial Clydeside, and the awe of staying with a great-aunt who believed

less in joy than in "sin and God and the place beneath." That a good and interesting adolescence, without self-pity, came out of all this, he owed mainly to the grandfather with whom he lived, a wise old Highlander, and to his own romantic spirit, which saw poetry in unexpected places.

As he grew older he bicycled to youth hostels, where he caught a severe attack of Scottish nationalism, but his grandfather's good sense steered him clear, leaving him with a love for his country that went deeper than politics. These recollections are charmingly written, with humour and honesty, and nothing in them is better than the touching account of his first calf-love affair.

E. O. D. K.

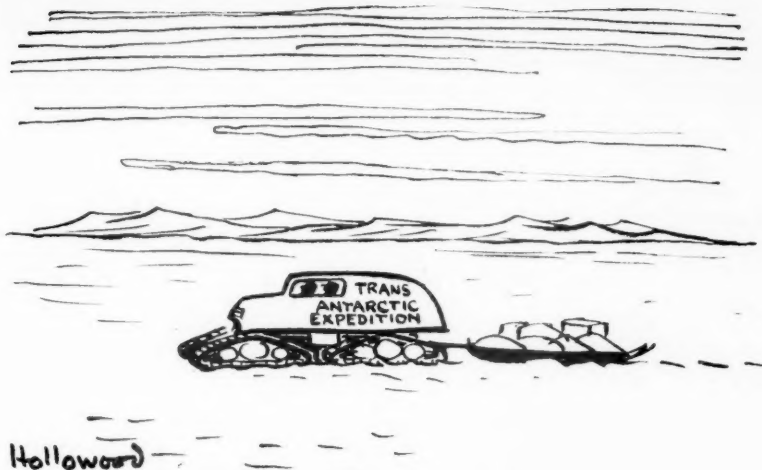
Sugar for the Horse. H. E. Bates. *Michael Joseph*, 12/6

Uncle Silas, the fruity and naughty old hero of Mr. H. E. Bates' latest book, has by virtue of previous escapades wormed his way into the hearts of many readers. Television has made sure of an even greater popularity. His wiliness must be a delight to all those dwellers in villages, who know that slow-speaking countrymen are seldom so simple as they seem. Yes, the author has observed acutely, and elaborated with brilliance. The old rascalion is here to stay, and I wish I could like him better. It is easy to appreciate his guile, his cunning, and his long-bow stories so racily and tantalizingly told between the swigs and the belches. I could not wish him to be sentimentalized into a dear old pippin, but I wish that fewer lines had been used to describe his horribly juicy appearance—ripe and ruby tongue, the roving bloodshot eye, the wet red lips, the strawberry nose, the dew-drop and the dreadful "double thumb." I would not forgo one of those rare-flavoured rural words or any (but one) of his adventures, or a single one of the beautiful and economical descriptions of the countryside. His rorty mind is a joy, but his body is a little too revolting.

B. E. B.

Grassblade Jungle. Nesta Pain. *Macgibbon and Kee*, 18/-

Miss Pain's second contribution to the naturalist's library is brilliantly done, in both style and content. Mercifully the creatures with which she deals (the cicada, grasshopper, praying mantis, termite, scorpion and honey bee) are diminutive—the imagination would stagger at the thought of such conflicts enacted even on the size-scale of the domestic pet. Murderously equipped forelegs, mandibles designed for munching creatures as large as their owner, deadly stings inserted with the care and precision of an expert surgeon with a probe; the mating dance with its awful climax when "they twain" literally become one flesh, as the unfortunate male finds himself serving as a handy meal after the exertions of the sexual act, and finally the macabre larder—a living



"Back in London it's just gone five-thirty and the toiling masses are stewing in their own exhaust fumes. Still homesick?"

tomb with its rows of silent meals awaiting the pleasure of the future generation, and kept fresh through the injection of a paralysing but not fatal secretion.

Not for the squeamish, these, even the gentle cicada serving as everyone's prey. Perhaps a story with human characters would make interesting reading from Nesta Pain's pen!

J. D.

Edward Tennyson Reed. Edited by Shane Leslie with a choice of caricatures by Kenneth Bird. *Heinemann*, 25/-

This memoir of the artist E. T. Reed (1860-1933) is composed to some extent from his own incomplete autobiography, filled in where necessary by Sir Shane Leslie. Reed, son of a distinguished chief naval constructor at the Admiralty, met many public figures in his youth as a result of his father's employment. The memoirs—no less enjoyable on that account—are of a kind now somewhat out of fashion: "On one occasion Linley Sambourne, having been asked if I knew a certain peer (and having, like myself, a frank penchant for the peerage!) broke out: 'Know Lord So-and-So? Why, my dear boy, I've shot at his house!' 'Did you hit it, old man?' chimed the incorrigible Burnand." Some sixty pages of comic drawings chosen by "Fougasse" admirably illustrate Reed's talent. He is perhaps chiefly remembered by those who enjoy comic draughtmanship for his prehistoric men, although these do not represent the height of his skill. He was at his best in pastiche. The Beardsley parodies are brilliant; perhaps the only parodies of that much-parodied artist that could be so named. Reed was equally at home drawing in the style of Japanese prints or that of his own *Punch* colleagues. His political caricatures, lively as they are, perhaps unduly underline the points they make

It is a disturbing, violent view of life, cloaked under a great display of high spirits and without much sense of design when not engaged in pastiche. A collection well worth making.

A. P.

AT THE PLAY

Requiem for a Nun
(ROYAL COURT)
Dublin Pike Follies
(LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)

THERE is no let-up at all in William Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun*, which he has adapted from his own novel. It finds spiritual truth through a sombre examination of the lowest in humanity which would be unbearably sordid if the play were not written with a kind of clinical compassion that weighs up the power of simple belief against the inevitability of human failing. It is a modern tragedy in which our emotions are engaged much less than our mind and imagination. At times it is needlessly obscure, so that while we worry over small matters of plot the main action goes ahead of us; here Mr. Faulkner the dramatist has been less successful than Mr. Faulkner the novelist. He seems to have over-compressed. Also some of the situations, notably the husband being brought to eavesdrop on his wife's confession, appear a little implausible in retrospect. But in the theatre *Requiem for a Nun* carries us along by sheer force of perception, and there is no doubt of its quality.

A negress, ex-prostitute and ex-dope-fiend, is to be executed for the murder of her mistress's baby. In a Mississippi prison she awaits her end calmly, supported by a glowing faith in salvation. The murder was apparently without motive. Her lawyer discovers a further clue and comes back from the trial determined that, if he cannot save her,

at least moral justice shall be done. He turns the screw on her mistress until at last she agrees to go with him in the middle of the night to the Governor, and tell her story.

In an almost laboratory atmosphere her confession reaches the depths of degradation. As an undergraduate she has been picked up by a drunk on the way to a baseball match, and after a car smash had been kidnapped into a brothel. There, in incredibly squalid circumstances, she had found a sort of love: the negress was her janitor, and a bond had grown up between them. When her lover was shot she escaped, and her drunk pick-up had married her out of pity. But even in marriage her roots were still in the brothel, and she hired the negress as a nurse for her children so that they could comfort one another with nostalgic professional gossip. In a flashback—never a very happy device, though it works well enough here—we see how the murder happened: her dead lover's brother coming to take her away, and the negress, devoted to the children, killing the baby rather than let it be launched in insecurity.

To reveal her inner self so completely the woman has to overcome everything in her character. She is fighting to recover hope by purging herself of lies. The faith of the negress, whom she visits before the execution, is too simple

for her to grasp, though she longs above everything to understand it.

In Paris the play moved me more than at the Royal Court. Possibly the adaptation by Albert Camus went deeper; possibly Catherine Sellers has a wider range of feeling than Ruth Ford. Miss Ford's performance is colder, more analytical, but it is a fine piece of work, a psychological strip-tease carried out with extraordinary accuracy. The negress is very touchingly played by Bertice Reading. As a character the lawyer is almost too poised to be true. One is never absolutely sure where he stands, but in the office of catalyst Zachary Scott gives him effective personality. Tony Richardson's production misses nothing, and Motley's set is particularly good, though I thought it a pity that the biggest scene should be so far backstage. Minor faults apart, so tensely interesting a play has not come to London for some time.

In Dublin, in its tiny mews theatre, the Pike company sticks pins sharply into local society with the kind of revue on tap in the pocket dives of Paris; up-to-date with the news, impertinent and gay. Transferred to the much larger stage of the Lyric, Hammersmith (for three weeks), its attack is diluted. Most of the programme comes from Carolyn Swift, the music from George Desmond

Hodnett, and the producer is Alan Simpson. The present slant is towards Farjeon, and away from Dublin, and very mild Farjeon can scarcely satisfy the seasoned palate of London. Turns are apt to go on too long for the sake of only a slight point, but given a good satirical sketch the company leaves its ability in no doubt. There is a very funny excerpt from a passionate Italian film, to show the futility of English sub-titles, and a neat parody of O'Casey, as he might have written *Look Back in Anger*. In terms of Samuel Beckett *Waiting for Aloysius* wittily rags Dublin bohemians stuck for a corkscrew while they moan over their faulty integration with mankind. It is a pity there is not more in this line. Laurie Morton, who mocks resourcefully, leads the ladies, and Milo O'Shea, an engaging rubber-faced comedian, the men. His best individual appearance is in a warning demonstration of the effects of the Method on a pupil's sanity.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Flowering Cherry (Haymarket—27/11/57), a modern domestic tragedy. *Measure for Measure* (Old Vic—27/11/57) very well done. *Roar Like a Dove* (Phoenix—2/10/57), good light comedy, for adults. ERIC KEOWN

AT THE GALLERY



Paintings at the Victoria and Albert Museum

AFTER various ups and downs, the oddly assorted oil paintings at the Victoria and Albert Museum are now grouped in some well-lit rooms on the first floor. Of these the main feature is the one hundred or so Constable oils which have belonged to the museum for many years—mainly the gift of Miss Isobel Constable. The particular shade of red—a curiously sombre one—of the background for these pictures may not please all viewers, and many more may regret that the pale water-colour type mounts, used for the last twelve years on the seventy or eighty small oil sketches, have not been replaced. As it is one must isolate the pictures from their background instead of having them enhanced by it.

Constable hardly ever sustained the superb quality of his small works in his larger pictures. Indeed, as the size of his canvases increased so, correspondingly, his vision flagged and monotony set in. A partial exception to this at the Victoria and Albert is his full-sized sketch for the "Leaping Horse." It is therefore all the more essential that the small works, the very essence of his art and something uniquely beautiful in painting, should be seen at their best in this, the leading Constable collection.

One might win an occasional bet on there being oil paintings by Ingres at the Victoria and Albert; and indeed there are



Nancy Mannigoe—BERTICE READING Temple—RUTH FORD
Gowan Stevens—ZACHARY SCOTT

[Requiem for a Nun]

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two in the Ionides collection, an odalisque and a sketch for an historical picture. The collection includes a view of an opera by Degas (given with the other Ionides pictures as far back as 1902), a sea piece by Courbet, a sketch by Delacroix and a fine picture of two men sawing by Millet. These and delightful neighbouring works by Gainsborough, Reynolds, Bonington, Sandby and the princely pot-boiler, Morland, are all well hung on chalky green. Some contiguous rooms for English watercolours form one of several minute outcrops in the building for the three-quarters of a million works under the care of the Keeper of Prints. Scratching the surface of this hoard recently, I came across a group of one hundred and eighty Tiepolo drawings, acquired fifty years ago for something now nearer the price of a coat than a car.

ADRAIN DAINTRY



AT THE PICTURES

The Tin Star
The Story of Mankind

IN spite of all temptations to go overboard with ribald delight about *The Story of Mankind*, I must stick to my usual rule and begin with the film that I think the best of this week's lot—a Western, *The Tin Star* (Director: Anthony Mann). This is of the school of quiet, unemphatic, atmospheric, as it were *civilized* Westerns, and admirably done by all concerned.

It begins, as so many of these things do, with the arrival of a stranger in a small town. His welcome is somewhat less than warm, for he leads a horse slung with the dead body of a wanted man and appears to be interested only in collecting the reward. After this skillfully-presented opening sequence, the basic situation develops: the sheriff is a very young, inexperienced man appointed because no one else would take the job, and the new arrival, exasperated by the sight of suicidal incompetence, is drawn more or less against his will into giving the tyro lessons in the handling of guns and men. Anthony Perkins makes the young man credibly resentful of patronage and unwilling to be shown up by this know-all, and well suggests his gradual acquisition of skill and the way he comes to respect and like his teacher; and Henry Fonda as the man himself gives a most excellently convincing impression of a profoundly experienced, weather-beaten, superficially hardened but fundamentally kindly character.

There is, of course, a woman (Betsy Palmer), a widow with a small son (Michel Ray), who gives the visitor a room when the town's sourpuss hotel manager has turned him away. The bones of the story may be conventional enough, but the whole piece comes over very successfully. Sound—and, for that matter, *silence*—are beautifully used to establish mood and build suspense, and



Morg Hickman—HENRY FONDA

Bart Bogardus—NEVILLE BRAND

Ben Owens—ANTHONY PERKINS

[The Tin Star

some episodes that are in essence familiar (the who-draws-first encounters with the bad man, the saloon scenes, and so forth) are freshened and made unusually striking by imaginative visual treatment. There is also plenty of good character playing: John McIntire is memorable as the pawky old Doc McCord. Most people should enjoy this.

And most people, one way or another, I think should enjoy *The Story of Mankind* (Director: Irving Allen). This quite extraordinary work purports to be a film version of Hendrik van Loon's book, which according to the publicity has sold twenty-three million copies in twenty-two languages (including Esperanto); but whether the author would approve of it is another matter.

One doesn't know where to begin; I never in my life saw anything like this, and, incidentally, I never in my life laughed so much at things not apparently meant to be funny. The baffling point is that these are sandwiched between things one is plainly meant to laugh at: Groucho Marx, for instance, as Peter Minuit (the man who bought Manhattan from the Indians for a string of beads), whose reply to the Indian chief's greeting of "How!" is "Three minutes, and leave 'em in the shell."

The whole thing is framed, as it were, in some kind of celestial court, which is to decide whether mankind shall be allowed to explode a "super-H-bomb" and be exterminated, or not. The Spirit of Man (Ronald Colman, in soft hat and raincoat) and the Devil (Vincent Price, in morning coat and red stock, with beard and sneer) argue against and for,

and each presents successive scenes, from the whole history of man, in support of his case. And from very nearly the whole history of films, actors and actresses take part in these scenes: Francis X. Bushman is Moses, Virginia Mayo is Cleopatra, Charles Coburn is Hippocrates, Peter Lorre is Nero, Agnes Moorehead is Queen Elizabeth, Harpo Marx is Newton (slicing the apple through the strings of his harp), Marie Wilson is Marie Antoinette—the cast list is a foot long, full of celebrated names. And yet the thing is not a "1066 and All That": there are bits one is meant to take seriously, like the burning of Joan of Arc (Hedy Lamarr) . . .

Well, I suppose some of the twenty-three million will be deeply impressed. Me, I'd see it again, any time, for the laughs. One way or the other, it should clean up.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London everything is overshadowed by *The Ten Commandments*—though not for me. The outstanding films are still the impressive French tragedy *He Who Must Die* (6/11/57) and the touching French (René Clair) comedy *Porte des Lilas* (13/11/57). *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57) is still flourishing. Preston Sturges's French film *The Diary of Major Thompson* has obviously been hacked to pieces (one episode begins only to be cut off in mid-sentence) and what is left is at best poor man's Tati.

Most notable release: *The Three Faces of Eve* (30/10/57), with a very striking performance by Joanne Woodward.

RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

Tightrope Walkers

DESCRIBING the mime of Marcel Marceau *Radio Times* pulled on its learned sock, stretched its brow and dipped its pen into prose of majestic dignity. "Marcel Marceau," it said, "is one of the greatest exponents of the art of pantomime in the world to-day. His acute observation of people and situations, usually funny, sometimes sad, but always poetic, is equalled only by the skill with which he interprets the fantastic characters he has created." "Greatest exponents," "art of pantomime," "acute observation," "skill," "poetic"—how many of these terms would ever be used to describe the regular standby comics of radio and television, even in obituary notices? How often do "The Broadcasters," the Corporation's star columnists, refer to Tony Hancock, Ted Ray, Bernard Braden or Eric Barker as exponents, acute observers, poets, artists? Not, I think, very often.

To win praise in such terms these days the comedian or entertainer must at all costs avoid popularity with the mass audience of television. It is better if he is a foreigner with but a poor command of the English language. He (or she) is wise if his public appearances are restricted to concerts or festivals of art devoted to deadly serious matters, where a trace of humour, however slapstick, is applauded wildly by highbrows and would-be highbrows desperately anxious to let down their hair. For this relief much thanks, and all that.

Most of these concert entertainers are excruciatingly dull. Their humour is



MARCEL MARCEAU

stale, their routine dreadfully amateurish, and, of course, they would not last five minutes in hurly-burly competition with the popular professionals. But by decorating their turns with cute references to fashionable upper-class writers, composers and artists they somehow manage to please their carefully invited audiences. I find them sickeningly pretentious. Snobstuff.

These reflections are probably less than fair to Marcel Marceau, who mimes elegantly, energetically and precisely even when he has nothing original to put across. Of the five pantomimes included in the B.B.C. telerecording only one, bearing the unambiguous title "Adolescence, Maturity, Old Age and Death," seemed to merit literary encomiums: the rest, "The Walk Against the Wind," "The Tightrope Walker," "The Staircase" and "B.I.P. at the Dance Hall," were souvenirs of the early Chaplin. I enjoyed

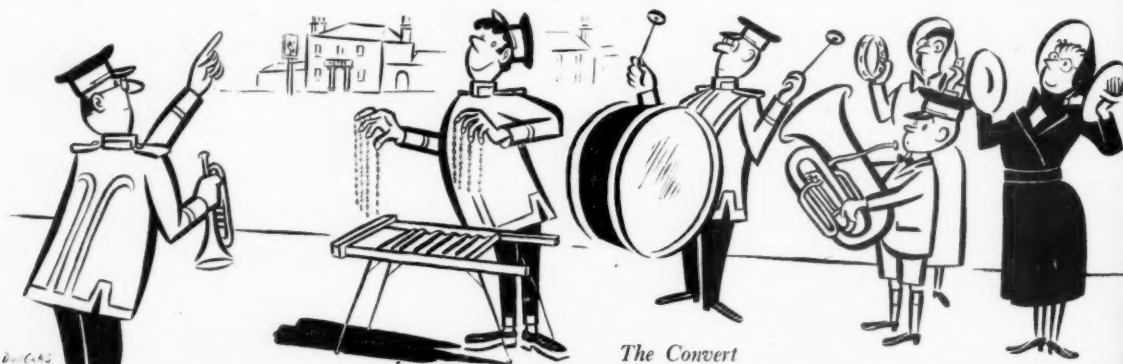
them all, but afterwards I wondered how M. Marceau's fanatical admirers would react if he abandoned his ballet pants and appeared before them in outside boots, baggy trousers and battered bowler. I am still wondering.

"First Hand" is a very good series, and the item called "The Finest Hour," a well-documented feature on the invasion scare of 1940, kept the programme's standard flying high. There is as yet no sign that the televising public (which is not of course quite the same thing as the reading public) has had enough of the war, and I imagine that a revival of the famous American series "Victory at Sea" and the British follow-up called, I think, "War in the Air," would

now prove very popular—except perhaps with professional diplomats.

Another absorbing programme was the repeat of Aidan Crawley's "Europe—Friend or Foe?" an hour-long review of the implications of the Common Market Treaty. This film, edited by Alan Martin and produced by Anthony de Lotbinière, is a handsome pictorial essay on the advantages of free trade and commercial and industrial integration. Unlike so many of the topical reports that appear in "Panorama" and "This Week" it has the space to develop its argument logically and thoroughly, to dot its "i"s and cross its "t"s. It is a film that should be immensely useful to "A" level and university students, and shown often enough it may even cause the leaders of the isolationist press to think again.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



The Convert

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